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FREE TAKE ONE

Suffering from the pothole plague as roads deteriorate

By Owen Hughes

POTHOLE busters have been mobilised to fix Hampshire's crumbling roads after the recent cold snap.

Hampshire Highways will send out extra pothole buster gangs to tackle the worst of the damage on the roads following a bitterly cold winter which caused massive potholes to appear across the county.

Councillor Rob Humby, executive member for environment and transport at Hampshire County Council, said: "We've got a massive challenge on our hands.

"The damage inflicted by snow and ice countywide on Hampshire's roads is severe.

"With a multi-million pound repair bill on our hands, we've mobilised extra pothole buster gangs to go out immediately to make interim repairs and, with our budgets already under pressure, have had to re-programme planned maintenance work."

Basingstoke and Deane Liberal Democrats have heaped pressure on Hampshire County Council to address the town's pothole problem.

Cllr Andy Konieczko said: "Basingstoke's roads are being left to deteriorate and we're all suffering from the resulting pothole plague.

"Large potholes in Bliss Close were marked out by the council in white paint more than 12 months ago but the council hasn't fixed them yet and the markings are now beginning to fade. That's not acceptable.

"Major defects on Sullivan Road haven't been touched since they were reported and marked out back in January."

Cllr Humby added that without significant extra national funding to repair the roads around Hampshire, it is "likely to take around 12 months" to get the road network to the same condition it was in before winter.

"Reports of the RAC's 'fears' that the cold snap will result in more potholes are absolutely correct," he said.

"Highways maintenance has been underfunded by the Government for years, leaving the local road network in a state of decline, even before the snow."

Amanda Stretton, motoring editor at Confused.com, said: "It's alarming that pothole related breakdowns have doubled since the recent bad weather.

"Drivers are already fed up with having a bumpy ride because of potholes."

In 2016, potholes caused £3.1million worth of damage to vehicles in the UK, according to research by the insurance comparison site.

The combined depth of potholes across the south east is almost 30 times as deep as the English Channel.

Cllr Humby said: "The stark fact is that local councils are woefully under resourced for this vital part of infrastructure."

Hampshire residents are urged to report potholes and road defects direct to the county council at: http://bit.ly/2HkEVdV

Hose about having a go?

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service asked a group of female support staff to don firefighters' uniforms for International Women's Day last week to encourage more women to consider a career in the fire service.
The nine HFRS office staff ran hoses, carried out ladder lifts and conducted searches while wearing full breathing apparatus.
The tasks were designed to give the women an insight into the tasks performed by HFRS crews, with some of the participants now considering applying to become on-call firefighters.
Turn to page three for more.

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Publishers Statement
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Printed by Iliffe Print - 'PrintWeek Newspaper Printer of the Year 2016'

Body of missing man found

By Owen Hughes

A BODY has been discovered as part of the investigation in to the whereabouts of a Basingstoke man who went missing last week.

Mark Robinson, pictured, from Upton Grey, was reported missing at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 6 from the Bidden Road area.

Hampshire Constabulary launched an appeal on Wednesday last week to locate the missing 56-year-old as police grew increasingly concerned for Mr Robinson's well-being.

Police issued an update on Thursday to say a body had been found during the investigation.

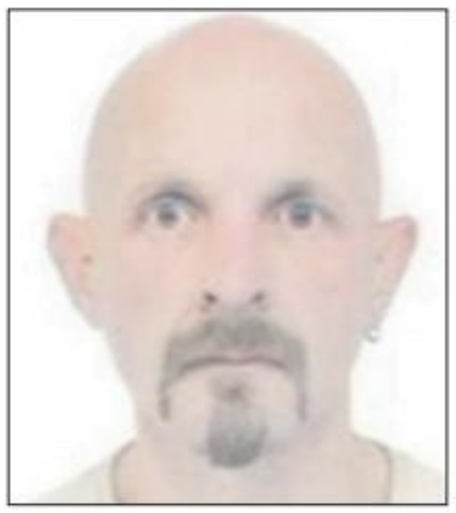
Mr Robinson's family have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers at this time.

Formal identification procedures are on-going.

The death is not being treated as suspicious and a file is being prepared for the coroner.

A spokesperson for Hampshire Constabulary said: "It is requested that the privacy of the family is respected."

Anybody with information should call police on 101, quoting 44180085866.



Mini golf course to get medieval revamp

MINI golf in Basingstoke will return to the dark ages as a golf centre prepares for a medieval mulligan.

A planning application submitted to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will involve a £370,000 revamp to transform the mini golf facility at Basingstoke Golf Centre with a medieval make over.

The family attraction, which is managed by the Basingstoke and Deane Community Leisure Trust and agent Serco, will have its nine holes plus putting green upgraded to a new Adventure Golf course.

Upgrades could begin in spring, ready for a summer 2018 opening.

Plans include an educational element and will be fully accessible for disabled users.

Communities councillor Simon Bound said: "The activities at the golf centre are ideal for families but these investments to council-owned leisure facilities are necessary as they ensure they remain high quality."

The mini golf course as it is currently

Chair of the Basingstoke and Deane Community Leisure Trust Hazel Tilbury said: "The medieval theme links to the market town heritage of Basingstoke, which will allow local school children to learn more about the history of the town in a fun enjoyable manner."

The plans form part of a £1.3million investment into new features at the Aquadrome, Basingstoke Golf Centre and Tadley Swimming pool.

Road closures planned on M3 for improvements

OVERNIGHT closures on the M3 near Basingstoke and Hook will be in place for the next few weeks as road improvements are carried out.

The northbound slip at junction five for Hook will be closed between 9pm and 6am until Friday this week and then again Monday to Wednesday next week for resurfacing works.

Lane closures will also be in place during the same times on the southbound carriageway between junctions five and six at Basingstoke until March 26 for resurfacing works on a section of the M3 near Mapledurwell.

Junction seven Basingstoke to nine Winchester will be closed overnight until April 6 with a diversion in place via the A33.

Narrow lanes will be in place 24/7 on the roundabout beneath the M3 at junction 6 for bridge strengthening, with the southbound exit slip closed overnight until March 26.

Tributes paid to family man killed in crash

TRIBUTES have been paid to a father who "lived for his kids" who died during a crash on the A34 near Basingstoke last month.

Craig Hall, 36, of Ainsworth Way, Middlesborough, was killed when the mini-bus he was travelling in collided with a lorry on the A34 southbound.

Craig Hall with his step-daughter Shannon
Picture: Hampshire Constabulary

The collision happened just south of the Sutton Scotney Services at 4.40am on February 26.

Mr Hall, a passenger in the mini-bus, was pronounced dead at the scene.

On Friday, his family paid tribute to him. Craig's wife, Jackie Hall, said: "Craig was a family man with a heart of gold. He would do anything to help anyone. If he got a phone call in the early hours from a friend for a lift then he would get up and do it.

"He was a real joker and prankster.

"His loss left such a massive hole in everyone's lives. He lives for his kids and me. He was not just my best friend, but also my soul mate."

A 19-year-old man, from Durham, has been arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving and driving whilst unfit through drugs.

He has been released from custody but remains under investigation.

Call 101 quoting 44180075034 if you have any information about the crash.

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Fun day puts the focus on women firefighters

By Owen Hughes

HAVE-A-GO office staff swapped pens for hoses at Hampshire Fire and Rescue to mark international Women's Day.

The group of women were put through their paces by the fire service as they carried out simulated ladder lifts, hose-running, equipment carrying, hose techniques and even a search wearing full breathing apparatus.

All nine of the participants are members of the fire service staff and some are now considering applying to be on-call firefighters in their spare time.

Others just wanted an insight into the challenges that fire crews face on a regular basis.

Fiona Sale from the service administration team is now hoping to become an on-call firefighter. She said: "This was such a valuable insight into the challenges our crews face and it was inspiring to be coached by women who have already done it."

Inclusion and diversity manager Leanne Illman said: "The day was a great success and gave us all a greater insight into the incredible work our firefighters do every day.

"It is also important to raise awareness that women are perfectly capable of becoming firefighters and are increasingly doing just that.

"The day was a lot of fun but it is also about giving more women a taste of what firefighters do and making people realise they can overcome challenges they may not have previously thought possible."

The half-day event saw the team dressed in full fire kit, lifting weights in the appliance bay and practising running out hose reels on the drill yards.

County councillor Chris Carter, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority chairman, said he was "delighted to take part in the event".

Cllr Carter said: "The high calibre of our firefighters is well known – and this has been highlighted by their hard work in exceptional conditions during the past week.

"It was extremely challenging although just a taste of the rigorous training our crews go through.

"I hope the event will raise awareness that women really can consider pursuing a career as a firefighter – whether full-time or on-call."

Have a Go days are also being planned for members of the public to help boost diversity in the service.

From left, fire service staff Zoe Robson, Jane Sharples and Carol Smith and right, Debbie Worley with Firefighter Julie Jacobs

Nursing recruitment day

A SPECIALIST nurse at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital is hoping to share her experience with a new influx of newly-qualified and experienced nurses.

A number of opportunities are being made available for nurses who would like to work in the acute assessment unit at Basingstoke with a special recruitment event taking place later this month.

Sarita Kataria-Julka, pictured, clinical matron on the unit, said: "I'm really looking forward to this event and meeting nurses who, like the rest of the team, are passionate about patient care.

"People coming along will get the chance to look around the unit, hear about the training we offer our nurses, talk about how they would like to progress their careers and much more.

"There will even be the opportunity to have an interview and secure a conditional offer on the day."

The recruitment event will be held at The Ark, Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, from 10am on Wednesday March 21.

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has around 6,000 staff providing hospital services to approximately 570,000 people in Hampshire and parts of West Berkshire.

For more information and to sign up for the recruitment event, visit: http://bit.ly/2Fkpyp0

Say 'I do' to outdoor wedding in gazebo

A 19th century Basingstoke hotel has become one of only a handful of venues in the county fully-licensed to hold outdoor weddings in its new gazebo.

Audleys Wood Hotel held the opening ceremony last month with Mayor Paul Frankum cutting the ribbon.

General manager Paul Morgan said: "With a growing demand from our couples to have an outside venue where they can both hold their official ceremony and kick off their celebrations with a drinks reception, I have no doubt our new gazebo will be a welcome addition."

He added that the "wonderful grounds" in the hotel's estate provide the perfect backdrop for "fairy-tale weddings".

Audleys Wood already hosts weddings in its various surroundings for up to 200 guests.

Sex assault charges for ex-rugby club man

BASINGSTOKE Rugby Club's former chair of players has been suspended after being charged with a series of sexual assaults and indecent exposure.

David Ashford, 33, of Coniston Road in Kempshott, pleaded not guilty to the charges brought against him at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on March 1.

Mr Ashford is accused of three counts of touching a woman in a sexual way without consent and one count of exposing his genitals.

The alleged incidents occurred on November 11 following a match at the club's facilities in Pack Lane.

The case has been referred to Winchester Crown Court where Mr Ashford will stand trial.

A spokesperson for Hampshire Constabulary said: "We can confirm we received a report relating to a sexual assault which is alleged to have taken place at Basingstoke Rugby Club, in Pack Lane, Basingstoke, on 11 November 2017.

"An investigation was carried out and David Ashford, 33, of Coniston Road, Basingstoke, appeared at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on Thursday 1 March following a postal requisition to answer to three charges of sexual assault and one of indecent exposure."

Mr Ashford has been released on unconditional bail.

Basingstoke Rugby Club were contacted for comment.

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Lives at risk from the drop in living donors

By Owen Hughes

HEALTH services have warned that lives are being lost as the number of living kidney donors in Hampshire plummets to its lowest in five years.

The number of living kidney donors in the county has fallen by more than a third in the last five years, from 37 in 2013 to only 24 last year.

There are currently 126 people waiting for a kidney in Hampshire and 48 have died on the transplant list waiting for a kidney in the last five years.

NHS Blood and Transplant said it is worried about the decline in living kidney donations in Hampshire as national figures hit an eight year low.

The figures were published for World Kidney Day last week (March 8) with an appeal for more people to consider making a life-transforming donation while they are still alive.

Lisa Burnapp, NHS blood and transplant lead nurse for kidney donation, said: "Last year, 261 people died in the UK waiting for a kidney transplant and many of those lives could have been saved through increased living kidney donation.

"Living donation has been a major success story for the UK, with one in three patients receiving a kidney transplant from a living donor, so the decline in Hampshire and around the UK is worrying.

"We are investigating the causes and working closely with the clinical community, NHS England and Health Departments in all four UK countries to reverse the trend.

"Anonymous altruistic donations are especially important because they can start transplant chains.

"It's no coincidence that the high figures for 2013 came when altruistic donation was at its highest ever level."

There were 990 living kidney donors in the UK during 2017, a 10 per cent decline on the highest ever year, 2013, and the first time the number has dropped below 1,000 since 2009.

The decline in living kidney donation is especially concerning for the black and Asian patient communities.

Organs are matched by blood group and tissue type and people from the same ethnic background are more likely to be a match.

However, black and Asian families are less likely to agree to deceased organ donation or to donate anonymously as living donors, which means black and Asian kidney patients rely disproportionately on living donations from family members.

In the UK living kidney transplants have been performed since 1960.

New care service to help victims

Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney, Police and Crime Commissioner Michael Lane and National Lead for Victim Support Diana Fawcett

VICTIMS of crime in Hampshire will have access to "better support" following the launch of a new care service last week.

Police and crime commissioner Michael Lane announced the support service after the successful delivery of the Victim Care Service since its inception three years ago.

The service has supported more than 190,000 victims of crime across the Hampshire policing area.

The support provided by charity Victim Support can be practical, such as providing security items, or emotional support by trained case workers and volunteers.

Ian Stiff, from Victim Support, said: "Victim Support are delighted to have retained the contract to deliver the Victim Care Service for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

"We have many years of experience to draw from in delivering support to victims of crime and will be making some significant enhancements to the service we provide."

Mr Lane said: "The service was able to reach victims who previously slipped through the net – which demonstrated the value it brings in supporting vulnerable victims and to the wellbeing of our communities."

The service will also launch a new web directory to help victims of crime find the support they need in one central location.

InBrief

Cyclist injured

BASINGSTOKE police closed a road in Bramley on Friday after a collision involving a male cyclist.

Police were called to the single vehicle collision in Bramley Lane at 9.39am following a report a cyclist had been involved in an incident.

The man was taken to Southampton General Hospital.

Police said the collision did not involve anyone from nearby Bramley Primary School.

Murder charge

A BASINGSTOKE man charged with the murder of Jason Williams pleaded not guilty when he appeared at Winchester Crown Court on Friday.

David John Brewer, 34, of West Ham Close, was charged with the murder on February 24.

Mr Williams's body was found in Russell Howard Park around 1.30am on February 20.

Brewer is due to appear at the same court again in May.

Fun for parents

A BASINGSTOKE day nursery will let parents have all the fun during a week of activities.

From Monday, the Kiddi Caru day nursery will have activities such as food tastings, learning different languages and a sponsored run in aid of Sport Relief.

Nursery manager Helen Kinch said: "We like to give them the opportunity to come in and get a real feel for what their child does here."

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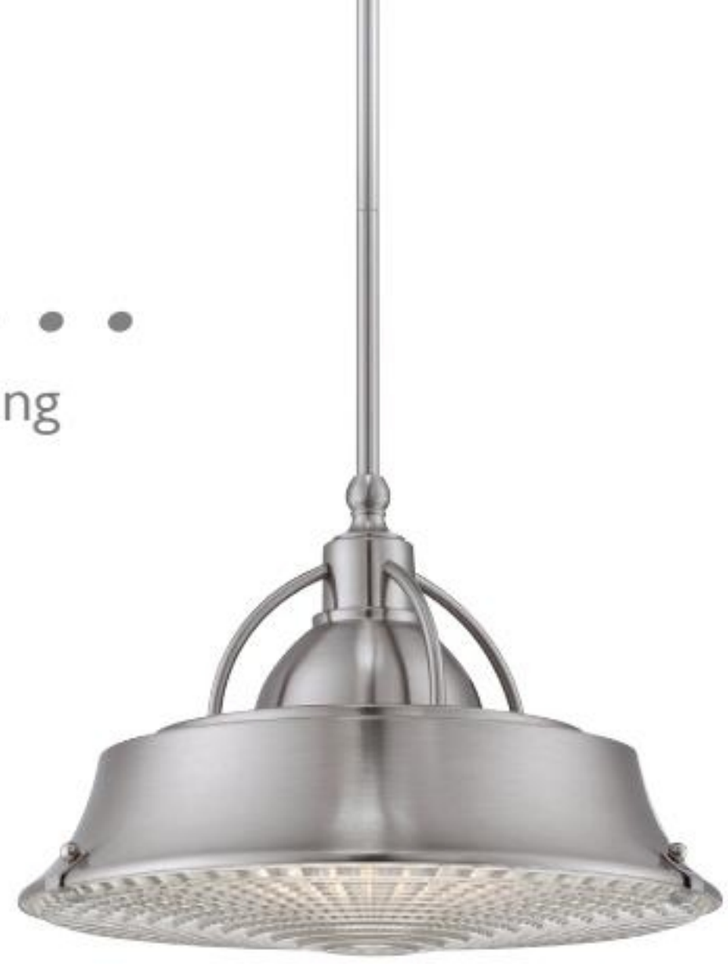

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Dealer had £244k of drugs at house

By Owen Hughes

A DRUG dealer from Basingstoke has been jailed for five years after being caught with around £244,000 worth of cocaine and cannabis.

Stuart Harris, 49, pictured, was sentenced at Winchester Crown Court on Friday after a police operation targeting drugs supply.

The sentence follows a warrant executed by officers from Basingstoke's Safer Neighbourhoods Team as part of Fortress, Hampshire Constabulary's response to drug-related harm.

Officers visited a house on Old Worting Road, Basingstoke, the then address of Harris, on January 30 last year.

Inside, they found a quantity of cocaine, with an estimated street value of around £44,000, and harvested cannabis and cannabis plants, with an estimated street value of around £200,000.

Harris pleaded guilty to possession of a Class A drug with intent to supply and production of a Class B drug.

Detective Constable Clare Hughes said: "Class A drugs can blight the lives of users, their families and local communities.

"Through Fortress, we work with our partners to reduce drug-related harm by restricting supply with enforcement, and providing support and offering diversionary activities to people on the periphery of the drugs trade.

"This conviction and sentence shows we are committed to tackling those who peddle these substances for their own financial gain."

Schoolboy becomes part of housing development's history

A HOOK schoolboy will leave a lasting mark on a new housing development after winning a competition to name the estate.

Amar Jheeta, 11, who attends Robert May's School, was selected ahead of 100 other entrants for his suggestion of Oakwood Grange, inspired by the number of trees in the area.

Hook Junior School hosted the competition in partnership with David Wilson Homes Southern while Amar was still a pupil there.

Amar's winning name will now be used on all of the development's signs and promotional material.

His father, Bob Jheeta, said: "We are very proud of Amar, he always complains he never wins anything so he certainly won on a large scale this time.

"For Amar to have been an integral cog in naming the development is great – he leaves his own small legacy in Hook."

Rob Allen, sales director for the developer, said the company was "delighted" to call the development Oakwood Grange "thanks to Amar's fantastic suggestion".

Amar also received a £25 Book Token and has since visited the development on Griffin Way North.

Around 215 homes will be built on the site adjacent to the London Road A30.

Amar was presented with a £25 Book Token for winning the competition by sales advisor Wendy from David Wilson Homes

InBrief

Charity concert

A BASINGSTOKE quartet is hosting an afternoon of chamber music next month to raise £2,500 for charity.

David Gallagher from the quartet said: "We decided to stage a professional concert for a private event, but we soon realised it would be a pity to keep it a secret."

The event will take place at Trinity Church, Sarum Hill, on Saturday April 21 at 4pm.

Proceeds will go to St Michael's Hospice.

Join sea cadets

TS Mary Rose Basingstoke and Deane Sea Cadets are inviting more young people (12 to 17 years) to join in activities ashore or on the water.

The Sea Cadets are recruiting as part of a national #NeverOrdinary campaign.

Young people can have a go at sailing, power boating, kayaking, rowing and windsurfing.

Sea Cadets meet at Sycamore Halls, Winklebury on Monday and Friday evenings.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/2FAhD3c

Easter story in song

BASINGSTOKE'S community choir will perform a free Easter concert at All Saints Church, Southern Road, at 7.45pm on March 23.

Entry is free and there will be a place collection for Basingstoke Foodbank.

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Honoured for ground-breaking work

AWARD-WINNING Basingstoke College of Technology is top of the class as the House of Lords names it in the Edtech50.

The announcement means the college is one of only three nationally in the Edtech50, which celebrates people, products and projects that are making a difference in the sector.

Principal Anthony Bravo said: "I am hugely proud that BCoT's ground breaking work has been recognised by Edtech UK.

"Education technology is one of the fastest growing sectors in this country and it is challenging the face of today's classrooms.

"In a digital centric world BCoT is leading the way in how colleges can embrace and harness the very latest technologies to remodel their teaching and learning.

From left, the college's Sam Wright, Will Turner, Charlie Lecuyer, Holly Hunt, Bradley Phillips, Wendy Hammond, Scott Hayden and Poppy Woodhams

"In turn our students progress, not only with a first class technical qualification, but with the digital skills very much demanded by universities and employers alike."

The college also took top honours in the Times Education Supplement FE awards recently.

Judges praised the college for its "strategic approach to the use of technology across the curriculum".

Inspirational women join for women's day

By Owen Hughes

A BASINGSTOKE entrepreneur joined Maria Miller for a reception at Downing Street to mark International Women's Day last week.

Catherine Waters-Clark, founder of Basingstoke charity Inspero, attended the event at No. 11 Downing Street on Thursday with the MP to celebrate the role of women in business.

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, hosted the reception for women entrepreneurs from around the country.

Catherine founded Inspero in May 2012 to work with young people, particularly those from disadvantaged communities in Basingstoke, to inspire them to achieve in life.

The charity supports young people and their families to lead healthy lifestyles by learning about food and the integral role it plays in their lives.

Inspero promotes healthy eating and living through their food growing, baking and cooking programmes: Love2Grow: Love2Bake: Love2Cook.

Catherine said: "I was delighted to attend the reception at No. 11 with Maria and meet with many other inspiring business women from around the country."

Maria Miller MP was joined by Catherine Waters-Clark for a reception celebrating International Women's Day at Downing Street

Mrs Miller said: "I was pleased to welcome Catherine to the reception to celebrate the role of women in business.

"Basingstoke is one of the top 10 centres of business in the south-east, and it is local businesswomen in smaller businesses who I find incredibly inspiring – people like, Catherine Waters-Clark, who founded Inspero to help children understand where their food comes from and how they can cook it."

In February, Mrs Miller spoke in the House of Commons to celebrate the work done by women in Basingstoke.

During her speech in the debate 'Vote 100 and International Women's Day', Mrs Miller said Hampshire is "incredibly privileged" to have Olivia Pinkney running Hampshire Constabulary, one of only four female chief constables in the country.

Mrs Miller said she was "hugely proud" of Hampshire Hospitals chief executive Alex Whitfield, Basingstoke business owner Beryl Huntingdon and Headway Basingstoke founder Evelyn Vincent.

She also recognised Muffin's Dream Foundation's Charlie Porter, theatre artistic director Mary Swan, Jo Stoker of St Michael's Church and the Basingstoke Town ladies football team.

She added: "The only thing that limits [young women] in this world is their imagination."

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New technology to help treat liver cancer

BASINGSTOKE and North Hampshire Hospital will be the first Trust in the country to trial ground-breaking technology to help treat liver cancer.

The pioneering software, which cost £45,000, gives surgeons a clearer picture of the overall health of someone's liver before surgery is carried out.

Mr Myrddin Rees, consultant liver surgeon, said: "Until now, the opportunity to extend surgery to more patients with primary and secondary tumours in the liver has been thwarted.

"Having a better idea of how the liver will respond and regenerate gives us the opportunity to take additional precautions and consider a number of different courses of treatment.

Consultant liver surgeon Myrddin Rees with a scan produced by the new technology

"It can help us decide when to carry out an operation as the liver may need time to recover before surgery, or work out which part of the liver should be left behind."

Funds for the software came from the North Hampshire Medical Fund, which sits outside of the NHS budget.

Mr Rees thanked the 150 people who attended a fundraising wine dinner at Highclere Stud to raise money for the technology.

He added: "We are sure that the research we are carrying out will make a real different to the lives of many patients."

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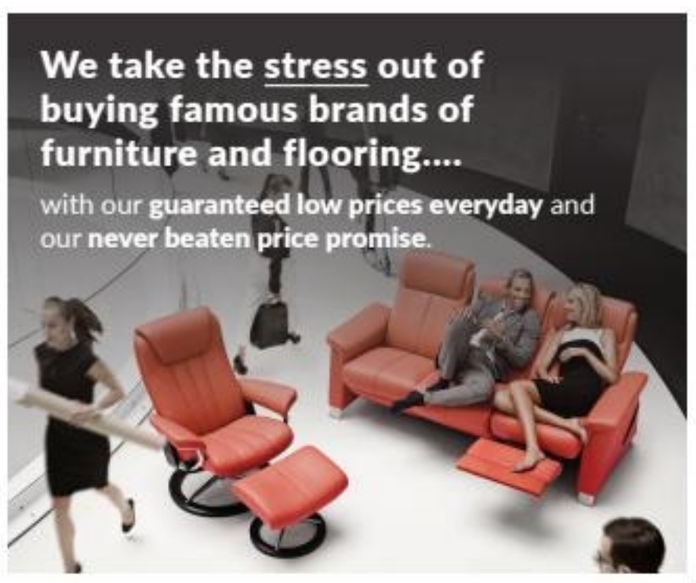
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Gang Show funds charity's party

By Owen Hughes

CUBS, Scouts and Guides celebrated another successful Basingstoke Gang Show earlier this month after raising £1,500 for a children's charity.

A cast of 67 children and young adults aged from eight to 22 years old took part in a run of 11 shows at The Haymarket culminating in an extravaganza on March 3.

The young performers delivered a series of songs, dance numbers and comedy sketches during the feel-good variety show.

In the true spirit of guiding and scouting the Gang Show did a good turn and helped others by raising funds for local charity Muffin's Dream Foundation.

The Basingstoke-based charity offers support and activities for children with a life long or life-limiting disability or illness.

Basingstoke Gang Show collected donations after every performance and managed to raise a staggering £1,500 for Muffin's Dream.

They presented a trustee of the charity with a giant cheque at their wrap party.

The funds will go towards Muffin's Dream Foundation 2018 Christmas party.

More than 60 families attend the annual Christmas party to celebrate the challenges they have overcome during the year.

The party caters for children with wide-ranging conditions and illnesses, including childhood leukaemia, cerebral palsy, autism and Down's syndrome.

Trustee of the charity, Rob Hernema, said: "Planning and preparation for our Christmas party always begins in January.

"Every year we seek ways of funding this event so as to ensure each family who attends has a fantastic time.

"We have never before secured the funding for the party this early in the year, and that is down to Basingstoke Gang Show and all their efforts.

"Their show was fantastic, and the entire cast and crew should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved for Muffin's Dream Foundation."

A special relaxed performance of the Gang Show was held on February 12 specifically adapted for those on the autistic spectrum and with other disabilities.

Children's charity Muffin's Dream Foundation was presented with the cheque at the final Basingstoke Gang Show performance

Say thank you to health workers with WOW award

GP practices in North Hampshire that have gone the extra mile for patients could be in line for an industry award.

Patients who have received exceptional care from North Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group and GP practices across the region are being encouraged to say 'thank you' by nominating staff for a 'Wow!' award.

Staff can be nominated for three categories, including 'excellent care', 'above and beyond', and 'collaborative working: you and your practice working together'.

Dr Nicola Decker, clinical chair at the North Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "We are very excited about launching the Wow! awards across North Hampshire as it gives us an opportunity to celebrate the wonderful care that takes place in the community.

"This initiative has been very successful in our local hospital and we hope to follow in their footsteps.

"As we move forward it is especially important that we, as healthcare professionals, and patients and the public work together to develop healthcare in north Hampshire.

"We also know that our patients and their families are the best ones to judge the quality of this care."

To nominate healthcare professionals for the Wow! awards, visit: http://bit.ly/2oOqDeC

InBrief

Hard work reward

BASINGSTOKE and North Hampshire Hospital staff would recommend the Trust as a place to receive treatment.

A national NHS staff survey revealed 78 per cent of people working in Hampshire would be happy with the standard of care if a friend or relative required treatment.

Chief executive Alex Whitfield said: "At a time when staff are under considerable pressure, it is heartening that their dedication and teamwork is paying off."

Flourishing wildlife

HEDGEHOG highways, wild bee friendly planting and swift bricks initiatives aim to encourage all forms of wildlife at the new Chapel Gate housing development in Basingstoke.

The renewed three-year partnership between RSPB and developers Barratt Homes will deliver more wildlife friendly housing in Hampshire.

Phone fines up

THE number of drivers in the region caught using their phone behind the wheel has fallen by nearly 50 per cent.

But the amount authorities collected in fines more than trebled in 2017 to £316,000, up from £98,600 the previous year.

Penalties doubled to six points and fines increased to £200 in March 2016.

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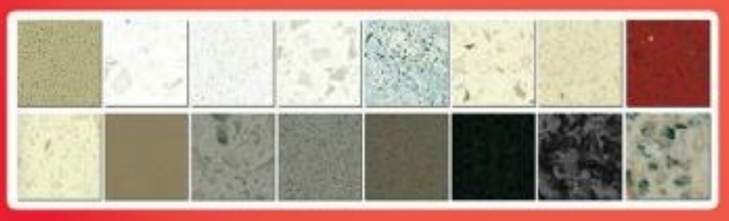

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Companies gearing up for annual Basingstoke business exhibition

BASINGSTOKE businesses are gearing up for the seventh annual Basingstoke Business Expo next week.

The event has gone from strength to strength and this year it will be run by the Best of Basingstoke directors, Julie Corlett and Neal Purvey.

Best of Basingstoke is an online directory championing local businesses offering detailed profiles, as well as reviews, events, news and details of community services.

Julie and Neal took over the Best of Basingstoke in March 2016, encouraging people to support and buy from local businesses.

Together, they have experienced working for and running a small business and understand the difficulties start-ups, sole traders and SMEs can have with marketing, support and expansion.

Through the Best of Basingstoke site, they aim to help increase exposure for companies in order for them to gain more enquiries, leading to competitive advantage and increased sales. With this in mind, spearheading the organisation of the expo at the Apollo Hotel on Thursday next week, is the perfect fit.

Neal said: "It has been such an honour to expand the Best of Basingstoke's offering, from not only online marketing, but also the opportunity for a physical event, allowing local businesses to exhibit their products, services and facilities. We are passionate about supporting businesses based here in Basingstoke, and, importantly, spreading the 'buy local' message."

There will be more than 50 companies from across the region at the expo, including Phillips Solicitors, Oakley Hall Hotel, Basingstoke Mercedes-Benz and Access Self Storage. Visitors will be able to meet local suppliers and learn more about what they have to offer.

Alongside the stands, there will be networking opportunities in dedicated speed-networking sessions, supported by the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, to help forge new business connections.

The seminar programme features talks from leaders in their fields and will cover a range of business skills topics, comprising of change management, digital analytics, introductions to social media platforms and opportunities for business expansion.

Neal Purvey greets Barbara Payne of Digital House at a pre-Expo exhibitor workshop

The event runs from 10am to 3pm allowing attendees time to visit all of the stands, listen to many of the talks and share ideas, or simply pop in for a short time, depending on what their working day allows.

There is still time to register to attend. For more information, visit ww.b2bexpos.co.uk/basingstoke

Most children get preferred school place

MORE than 92 per cent of pupils have been offered their first choice preferred place at a secondary school in Hampshire.

The county council received 13,981 on-time applications this year, up by 428 from last year.

But for pupils who did not secure a place at one of their chosen schools, the council has allocated them a place at another school with available spaces near where they live.

Councillor Keith Mans, Hampshire County Council's executive lead member for children's services, said: "Yet again, we have been able to offer a very high number of pupils a place at their preferred secondary school.

"I understand there will be some disappointment for those parents who did not secure a place at one of their chosen schools, but every child whose parents applied for a place at a Hampshire secondary school, has been offered one.

"There are always individual schools with exceptionally high demand, which is a credit to the high standard of teaching at these schools."

Parents can appeal to the council to be added to the waiting list for their preferred schools if their child missed out.

Offers for primary school applications will go out to parents on April 16.

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BBQ Steak Pizza BBQ chicken and steak, sweetcorn, peppers & tangy BBQ sauce			
Rooster Double roast chicken, BBQ & tandoori chicken			
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PROPERTYWEEKLY

Revealed: Smoke is the biggest turn off for landlords

By Romans Group

A survey has found that smokers are the least popular type of tenants amongst landlords. The survey conducted by YouGov had 64% of participants voting that smoking is their biggest turn off.

Smokers find themselves to be even less popular than the 44% of landlords who would prefer not to let to housing benefit tenants and the 40% who dislike student tenants.

Another revealing outcome of the survey is that Britain really is a country of pet lovers, with only 34% of landlords saying that they would not let to people with pets.

Michael Cook, Lettings Managing Director at Romans, comments: "Finding the ideal home for our tenants is very important to us and our landlords. To help ensure this happens we carry out thorough reference checks and supply tenancy agreements approved by a legal professional.

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Entertainment & Leisure

A learning curve

John Godber's comedy Teechers comes to The Haymarket

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Not quite your average teacher

By Josh Cox

From left, Rosalind Seal as Hobby, Jake Addley as Salty and Nicole Black as Gail

BLACKEYED Theatre revives its highly acclaimed production of John Godber's comedy Teechers and comes to The Haymarket for two performances only.

The play is about life at a struggling academy for Mr Nixon, an unsuspecting new drama teacher. Will Mr Nixon abandon his students for a green and pleasant grammar school?

With a minimal set, simple lighting and three actors, the performance brings to life an array of terrifying teachers and hopeless pupils through the eyes of Salty, Gail and Hobby; three Year 11 students about to leave school for good.

Although the play was written in 1984, director Adrian McDougall has brought the production very much up-to-date in a time defined by social media, cheap celebrity and the uncertainty of Brexit.

Crammed full of unforgettable characters, political left-hooks and razor-sharp comedy, Teechers is more relevant today than ever; a modern classic with something vital to say about education for the 'haves' and 'have nots'.

The cast of three all have a strong background in theatre and include Nicole Black whose film credits include Sticks (Brickwork Films) and The Jossers (The People Show), Jake Addley known from BBC's Doctors and Rosalind Seal whose film credits include Blind Date (Elegant If Productions) and The Pool (AKA Films).

Adrian, the director of the show, is the founder of Blackeyed Theatre. He grew up in Berkshire, studying modern languages at Southampton University, before becoming a theatre producer in 2004.

The performance will take place at 2.30pm and 7.30pm on Tuesday 20 March. Tickets are priced at £22 for the evening show and £19 for the afternoon performance.

The production carries an age guidance of 11 years and over.

For more information or for tickets, call the Anvil Arts box office on 01256 844244, or visit the website anvilarts.org.uk.

On stage

Sweet harmony

For an evening of karaoke, head over to The Tea Bar in Basingstoke on Saturday at 8.30pm.

Guests can either sing their heart out or relax and enjoy. The evening will be hosted by local company HarmanyVocals.

He ain't heavy

The Hollies will be performing at The Anvil on Thursday at 7.45pm.

The band have created some of the best songs ever, including American number one hit Long Cool Woman in a Black Dress, The Air That I Breathe, Bus Stop, I'm Alive, Carrie Anne, and the soul-stirring British number one He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother.

Tickets are £32.

Tiny dancer

The Rocket Man - A Tribute to Sir Elton John is coming to The Anvil on Friday next week at 7.45pm.

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Entertainment & Leisure

Enjoy a classic girls night out

By Josh Cox

AUSTRALIAN born author, screen-writer, journalist, party girl and all-round bonne vivant, Kathy Lette comes to The Haymarket as part of her debut live show Girls Night Out.

Best known for her many novels including How To Kill Your Husband: And Other Handy Household Hints, Foetal Attraction and Nip'n'Tuck, Kathy has decided it's time to take centre stage to share intimate details of her varied and multi coloured personal, social and professional life.

"Women are each other's human wonder bras – uplifting, supportive and making each other look bigger and better," says Kathy.

The show takes the audience from puberty blues to menopause blues, with tales of love, lust, men, marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, sexist bosses, teenage-daughter-wrangling, ageing and much more.

Kathy Lette first achieved success as a teenager with the novel Puberty Blues, which was made into a major film and a TV mini-series. After several years as a newspaper columnist and TV sitcom writer in America and Australia, she's written 12 international bestsellers in her characteristic witty voice, including Mad Cows (which was made into a film staring Joanna Lumley and Anna Friel), The Boy Who Fell to Earth, Courting Trouble, and Best Laid Plans – soon to be an eight-hour TV series.

Kathy appears regularly as a commentator on the BBC and Sky News. She is also an ambassador for Plan International, Ambitious about Autism and the National Autistic Society. She lives in London and can often be found at The Savoy (where she was writer in residence) drinking a cocktail named after her.

Kathy will come to The Haymarket on Wednesday 21 March at 7.30pm. Tickets to see her in action are £18. The show is deemed suitable for ages 16 and over.

To find out more or for tickets, call the Anvil Arts box office on 01256 844244, or visit the website anvilarts.org.uk.

On stage

Local rock

Rock and roll covers band 2nd Echo are heading back, by popular demand, to The Wheatsheaf in Alton.

The band play a wide range of songs from old rock covers and timeless hits by Abba and The Human League, to 90s punk from the likes of Blink 182.

This free gig will take place on Saturday from 8.45pm till 11.30pm.

Great heights

The Dolomites are putting on a free gig at Westside Community Centre in Basingstoke on Saturday March 24 from 8pm.

The Surrey and Hampshire based band combine four great vocal talents with an epic backing of lead and rhythm guitars, bass and drums.

Russian revolution

The Anvil will host the Philharmonia Orchestra on Wednesday 21 March as they deliver their 2018 concert Voices of Revolution: Russia 1917.

Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy will begin with Mosolov's The Iron Foundry, followed by Prokofiev's Piano Concerto no. 3 and to conclude, Glière's Concerto for soprano.

Tickets from £14 to £40. The concert begins at 7:45pm.

puzzle drome

Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

2	16	2	8	9	20	7	2	■	12	6	9	2
6	■	6	■	13	■	4	■	1	■	15	■	6
19	20	7	20	14	26	2	■	13	14	8	20	5
11	■	15	■	20	■	5	■	20	■	7	■	2
■	17	2	13	6	7	■	7	6	2	2	8	7
24	■	■	■	7	10	2	2	4	■	8	■	10
15	8	23	2	■	12	8	2	■	4	11	21	2
13	■	8	■	7	18	13	5	21	■	■	■	22
8	2	15	7	2	7	■	7	20	6	2	18	■
4	■	5	■	6	■	6	■	9	■	8	■	12
20	5	14	2	22	■	13	18	3	18	13	8	22
26	■	26	■	7	■	25	■	2	■	7	■	22
2	18	2	8	■	3	20	6	22	6	2	7	7

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2 E	3	4	5 M	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 W	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

SHEEP TOO PERVERSE

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. Who directed the Death Wish series of films starring Charles Bronson?
2. Tashkent is the capital of which country?
3. Which letter is found in the bottom right position of the letters on a standard QWERTY keyboard?
4. What C is the name of the wedges placed against a vehicle or aircraft's wheels to stop accidental movement?
5. Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly are the two main female characters in which musical?
6. In the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount is recorded in which gospel?
7. Which song written by Sting has the lyric "Since you've gone I've been lost without a trace"?
8. The Azores is an autonomous region of which European country?
9. Warren Jackson was the first of three actors to play which Coronation Street character?
10. William the Conqueror and Richard the Lionheart both died in which country?

NONAGRAM

C	O	G
S	P	A
E	A	T

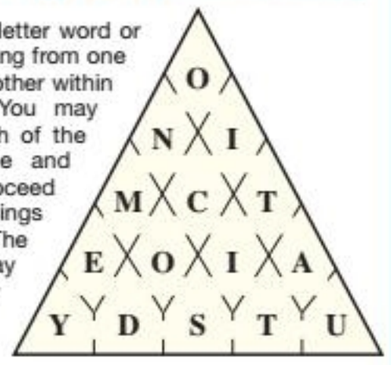
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
26 Good; 31 Very Good; 36 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

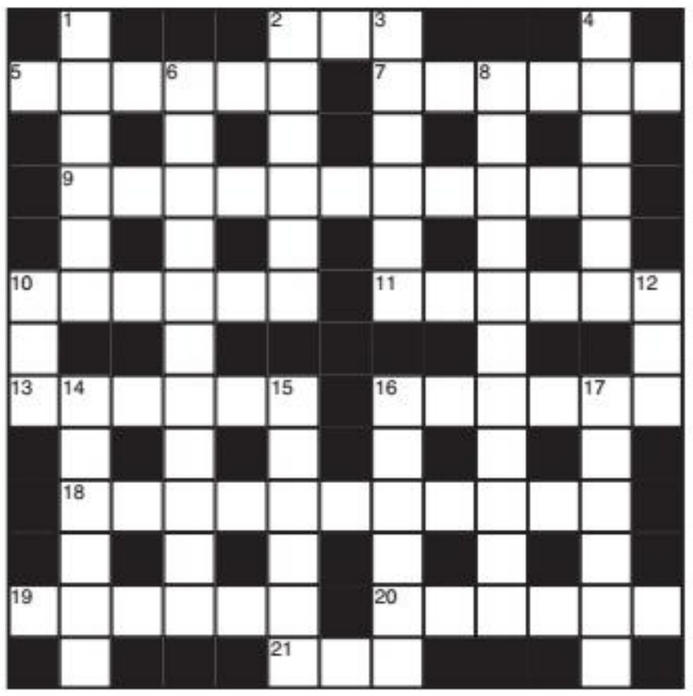


FIVE ALIVE

CA	MH	AO	SI	RS
HM	■	TC	■	IC
OA	DC	OT	UE	DR
RN	■	EL	■	AE
MG	YA	LT	OH	SP

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



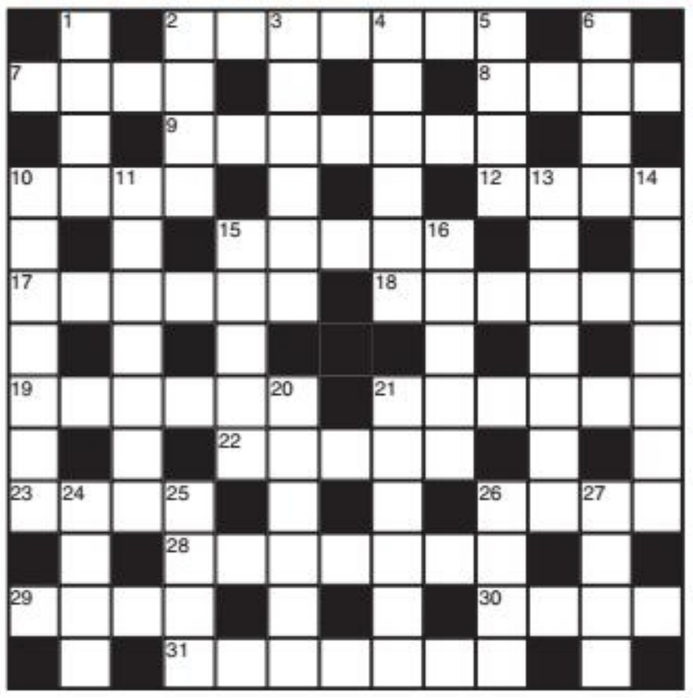
ACROSS

2. Cut-price lettuce (3)
5. Its lead decreases when it draws! (6)
7. Strangely muted, I was included in the boredom (6)
9. Enlarges new joint using tactical management and leadership (11)
10. Diffused the ray that's warm (6)
11. Shifted about and avoided doing something unpleasant (6)
13. Author sounds as if he is more correct (6)
16. Tins removed from Plasticine model of fish (6)
18. Mob in action upsetting union (11)
19. Follow boxer's prize money round the bend (6)
20. Vandal Gary, losing article, was famished (6)
21. Light skate (3)

DOWN

1. Dog for hunting second bird of prey (6)
2. 150 new grey ministers (6)
3. I'd lost out through being unemotional (6)
4. Place where one is surrounded by pure colour (6)
6. Somehow protects men from awkward occurrence (11)
8. Today hinder arrangement for removal of water (11)
10. To what an extent is this a greeting? (3)
12. When in clothing it shouldn't run fast (3)
14. Reimburse using some more coupons (6)
15. Rebel leader, one helping invader (6)
16. It's excellent to be like a fruit (6)
17. Midpoint of many an unfinished course (6)

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

2. Please greatly (7)
7. Opera solo (4)
8. French priest (4)
9. Alike (7)
10. Reed (4)
12. Body powder (4)
15. Old French province (5)
17. War fleet (6)
18. Pretentious (6)
19. Impede (6)
21. Part of foot (6)
22. Regretting (5)
23. Bloodstained (4)
26. Cross swiftly (4)
28. Final stage in a chess match (7)
29. Draw towards oneself (4)
30. Wheel spindle (4)
31. Biggest (7)

DOWN

1. German woman (4)
2. Confound (4)
3. Animal (anag.) (6)
4. Horse's gait (6)
5. Uncovered pie (4)
6. Cain's brother (4)
10. Selfish motorist (4,3)
11. Discussion group (7)
13. Living in water (7)
14. Axed (7)
15. Common viper (5)
16. Employing (5)
20. Steering device (6)
21. Enter by military force (6)
24. Egg (4)
25. Cry out (4)
26. Chair (4)
27. Hideous (4)

SUDOKU

Easy

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

Hard

4	6	1			2		9	7
	2	7	6					4
	8		4		7	3	2	
		3	9	8	5			
	4	9		2				
6				7		2	3	
						6		
8	9						4	3
	1	6	8		3	9	7	

		4					6	2
	3	8	1		2			
			5	6				
	1		9				4	
2							5	
					7	9		8
	9		4		6			3
		7		3				

EQUALISER

8 8
6 ◯ 3 ◯ 4
7 3
10 ◯ 2 ◯ 1
3 1

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

All puzzles on this page are supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try more of our puzzles interactively online go to **www.puzzledrome.com**

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SOLUTIONS

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 Michael Winner; 2 Uzbekistan; 3 M; 4 Chocks; 5 Chicago; 6 Saint Matthew; 7 Every Breath You Take; 8 Portugal; 9 Nick Tilsley; 10 France.

CROSS CODE

1 F	2 E	3	4 K	5 T	6 N	7 S	8 R	9 C	10 H	23 G	24 Q	25 Z	26 L
14 B	15 U	16 X	17 J	18 W	19 V	20 I	21 P	22 D				12 Y	13 A

HARD SUDOKU

9	7	4	3	8	5	1	6	2
5	2	1	6	9	4	8	3	7
6	3	8	1	7	2	4	9	5
7	4	9	5	6	3	2	8	1
3	1	5	9	2	8	7	4	6
2	8	6	7	4	1	3	5	9
4	6	3	2	5	7	9	1	8
8	9	2	4	1	6	5	7	3
1	5	7	8	3	9	6	2	4

EASY SUDOKU

4	6	1	5	3	2	8	9	7
3	2	7	6	9	8	1	5	4
9	8	5	4	1	7	3	2	6
2	7	3	9	8	5	4	6	1
1	4	9	3	2	6	7	8	5
6	5	8	1	7	4	2	3	9
7	3	4	2	5	9	6	1	8
8	9	2	7	6	1	5	4	3
5	1	6	8	4	3	9	7	2

MAGIC SQUARE: hope; over; pets; Erse.

WORD PYRAMID: Situation comedy.

EQUALISER: Clockwise from top left – add; subtract; multiply; divide. Total: 5.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 2 Delight; 7 Aria; 8 Abbe; 9 Similar; 10 Rush; 12 Talc; 15 Anjou; 17 Armada; 18 Pseudo; 19 Hinder; 21 Instep; 22 Ruing; 23 Gory; 26 Scud; 28 Endgame; 29 Pull; 30 Axle; 31 Largest.

Down – 1 Frau; 2 Dash; 3 Lamina; 4 Gallop; 5 Tart; 6 Abel; 10 Road hog; 11 Seminar; 13 Aquatic; 14 Chopped; 15 Adder; 16 Using; 20 Rudder; 21 Invade; 24 Ovum; 25 Yell; 26 Seat; 27 Ugly.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:

Across – 2 Cos; 5 Pencil; 7 Tedium; 9 Generalship; 10 Hearty; 11 Dodged; 13 Writer; 16 Plaice; 18 Combination; 19 Pursue; 20 Hungry; 21 Ray.

Down – 1 Beagle; 2 Clergy; 3 Stolid; 4 Purple; 6 Contretemps; 8 Dehydration; 10 How; 12 Dye; 14 Recoup; 15 Raider; 16 Peachy; 17 Centre.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 2 Please greatly (7); 7 Opera solo (4); 8 French priest (4); 9 Alike (7); 10 Reed (4); 12 Body powder (4); 15 Old French province (5); 17 War fleet (6); 18 Pretentious (6); 19 Impede (6); 21 Part of foot (6); 22 Regretting (5); 23 Bloodstained (4); 26 Cross swiftly (4); 28 Final stage in a chess match (7); 29 Draw towards oneself (4); 30 Wheel spindle (4); 31 Biggest (7).

Down – 1 German woman (4); 2 Confound (4); 3 Animal (anag.) (6); 4 Horse's gait (6); 5 Uncovered pie (4); 6 Cain's brother (4); 10 Selfish motorist (4,3); 11 Discussion group (7); 13 Living in water (7); 14 Axed (7); 15 Common viper (5); 16 Employing (5); 20 Steering device (6); 21 Enter by military force (6); 24 Egg (4); 25 Cry out (4); 26 Chair (4); 27 Hideous (4).

NONAGRAM: agape; apace; ape; aspect; atop; cape; capo; capot; cope; copse; epact; estop; gape; gasp; paca; pace; pact; page; past; pasta; paste; pate; pâte; pâté; peat; peso; pest; pesto; poet; pose; post; postage; potage; scape; SCAPEGOAT; scope; sept; soap; space; spae; spat; spate; spec; spot; step; stop; stope; tapa; tape; teacap; tope.

FIVE ALIVE:

(1) Across – Choir; Acted; Myths. **Down** – Charm; Octet; Rides.

(2) Across – Amass; Odour; Galop. **Down** – Among; Atoll; Scrap.

Competition

WIN tickets to an evening of Johnny Cash at the Anvil

Closing date: Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Clive John is an accomplished singer, songwriter based in Malvern, Worcestershire. However, Clive is better known to thousands across Europe as the voice of Johnny Cash as he plays the lead role in the critically acclaimed theatre production – 'The Johnny Cash Roadshow.' this is the only show to be endorsed by the Cash family.

You have the chance to experience this first hand when the show comes to the Anvil on Wednesday March 28.

The spirit of the Man in Black is alive and 'kicking like a mule' with an outstanding celebration of the iconic legend by the Carter/Cash endorsed Johnny Cash Roadshow.

This is gold standard, fire-cracking entertainment from the first note, delivering an inspired set of cherished numbers with impeccable rhythmic pace. A dynamic performance from an unparalleled group of highly talented musicians and a guaranteed treat for country music lovers and die hard Cash fans alike.

The stage lights up with a colourful explosion of energy, against a striking backdrop of classic screen imagery of the 'real deal'. Clive John, captures the essence of Cash with exceptional style and confidence. His deep, distinctive vocals are spot on, evoking pure country magic with Walk the Line, Folsom Prison Blues and A Thing Called Love.

Charismatic duets are superb. Renditions of Don't You Think It's Come Our Time and Jackson, encapsulate the tender charm and uplifting humour shared by the late enigmatic pair. The music doesn't miss a beat as the set glides seamlessly along, evoking a timeless quality of a golden era with fresh contemporary flair.

Martin Bentley (bass) is in a league of his own and Nick Davis (guitars) and Darren Bazzoni (drums) first class. Backing vocals by Louise Masters and Amanda Stone add sparkle and glamour as the Carter sisters, complimenting the line up with equally impressive versatility.

Win tickets!

We have two pairs of tickets for this amazing night of music and to be in with a chance of winning one all you have to do is answer the following simple question:

Q: In what year was Johnny Cash born?

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
www.basingstokeobserver.co.uk
For full terms & conditions go to www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk/about-us

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Ford EDGE Vignale 2.0 TDCi AWD PowerShift Auto

All-wheel drive does have the EDGE

By **Tony Yates**

THERE are a couple of reasons why you would buy a Ford EDGE. Firstly, the thought of doing 600mph in a hot hatch has had its day. Secondly, the EDGE is designed with you in mind – no fuss, no drama, just a decent vehicle that will be very loyal. Yes, occasionally it may annoy you, but in the end, you will forgive it – just because it makes you feel happy.

Of course, some of you will frown because its a diesel – I say, if you want to spend a big majority of your life waiting for the battery light to turn green on your new car before you can go anywhere, then be my guest. Call me selfish, but I will continue to burn actual fuel until the day comes when we have none left. I will then go out and buy a bicycle.

Power & efficiency

The EDGE I had on test was equipped with 2.0 litre TDCi diesel engine that provides a maximum power output of 210 PS and a torque figure of 450Nm, and will pretty much pull anything you care to tie to the back of it. On the combined cycle I achieved 45mpg which is pretty outstanding when you consider its size. For all of you speed demons out there, the EDGE Vignale will reach a top speed of around131mph and reach 0-62mph in 9.4s which is OK. Saying that, I just wish it had a little bit more power, but I will forgive it due to the fact that it's actually rather good.

The EDGE also gets a move on with minimal fuss and has plenty of low down grunt as mentioned earlier. Yes, It's not as refined as some, but then again you can't have everything.

On the road

I was impressed by how the EDGE just glides across even the roughest of road surfaces, whilst also making even the largest of potholes simply disappear. In fact, it's so smooth, that you could run over a dustbin lid and I bet you would barely notice.

Also, dare I say it, it makes for the perfect vehicle to tow a caravan with, 'but who would want to do that!'.

Into the corners, it also feels controlled and steady with minimal body roll for such a large vehicle. Even when pushed to its limits, there were no nasty surprises and nothing unexpected happened which means Ford has done some serious work on keeping everything in check. There was one niggle though, the EDGE was fitted with PowerShift, and it does suffer from a small amount of gearbox lag in normal mode. If I was you, I would keep it in sports mode pretty much all the time. Apart from that small niggle, all is good.

Don't forget, the Ford EDGE also has a great party piece in the form of AWD, meaning you can actually do a bit of off-road driving if that's your thing.

Design & technology

Inside, The EDGE looks great and has a nicely trimmed cabin which is something I think gives it the EDGE. You can also see that Ford has worked really hard to get the inside of the EDGE just right. Plus, its fitted with some of the best seats I have ever had the pleasure of sitting in. It's like sitting on my sofa at home it's that comfortable. The EDGE will also easily accommodate a large family with ease. We go camping every year as a family, and I always struggle to fit everything in. Well not if I had a Ford EDGE I wouldn't. I bet I could fit in all our camping gear, twice over.

The level of standard equipment on the EDGE Vignale version starts with 20" alloy wheels, unique Ford Vignale exterior styling, Ford sync 3 with voice control, acoustic side glass, adaptive lighting with LED headlights, unique LED fog lights, Active City Stop with pedestrian detection, front & rear parking sensors, premium leather seating, enhanced ambient lighting, tyre pressure monitoring system and a whole lot more that frankly just keeps on coming.

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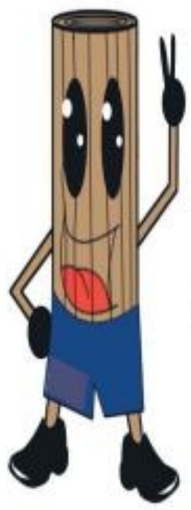

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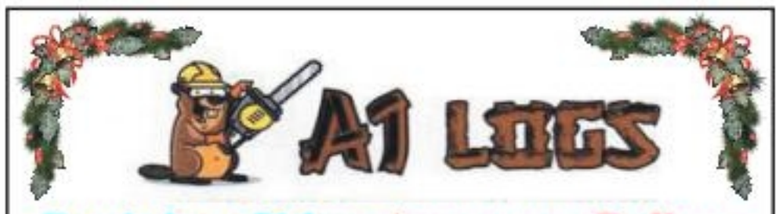

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PIA, genuine, kind Thai lady. Own restaurant business so very busy. WLTM white gent 30+. I am 43yrs and been living here for 3 years. **Text Only. Box: 4178749**

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man seeking

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WHITE male, 50, seeks genuine, loyal, sincere black female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 413261**

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ELEGANT smart Black man, athletic figure, smart, honest, loyal, would love to meet white lady so we can grow old together. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6119496**

IAN, 65, 5ft6, widower, looking for a soul mate and to love again. So if you're looking for someone to love and to be loved, I'm your guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 429231**

IAN, 65, 5ft6, blue/grey eyes, looking for a LTR with a nice lady of similar age, so please get in touch and call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 429841**

57YR old white gent, seeks lady for LTR. Age/looks/nationality unimportant, must be genuine and sincere. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 411467**

SINGLE male, 6ft, blue eyes looking for fun maybe more. Lets meet up and have some fun. **Text only replies. Box no: 4359515**

MALE, age 73, wishes to meet lady for friendship. Age doesn't matter. Likes travel and photography. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5544101**

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Smart move lifts Town up table

By George Welch

SAM Smart scored the only goal of the game as Basingstoke Town beat St Neots Town to jump into the top half of the table for the first time this season.

The midfielder slotted home the winner just before half time to extend the Dragons' unbeaten run to four matches and lift them up to 10th in the Southern Premier League.

'Stoke grabbed the three points in a scrappy game, in which the visitors could feel hard done by.

Manager Terry Brown said afterwards: "In the last two years we had to play well to win [but] we have a little bit more strength at the back with more resilience, nous and we were able to see out an ugly game. That wasn't pretty today by any means.

"We certainly capitalised on the very few chances we had."

Smart had a couple of shots while, at the other end, Luke Knight forced Colm McAdden into a tipped save.

Just when it looked like the first-half would end 0-0, the Dragons produced a great move and scored.

Defender Tim Wohlfiel made ground down the right and sent in a low cross, which Smart slotted into the net after 43 minutes.

There was more action in the opening exchanges of the second period than the entirety of the first.

Sam Argent went close for Town but the lively Stefan Brocolli went even closer for the away side as his cross glanced back off the crossbar.

Basingstoke were hard to break down and comfortably saw out the win and clean sheet.

'Stoke host league leaders Hereford on Saturday before welcoming Bishops Stortford to the Camrose on Tuesday.

Brown, buoyed by an upturn in form and looking forward to the visit of phoenix club Hereford, added: "We go into the top half of the table for the first time. We're on a good run with two fantastic games coming up.

"I don't care how good you are and how many people you've got following you, they won't relish their visit here."

Sam Smart netted the winner for Town. Picture: Steve Gridley

Back to winning ways after promotion hopes are hit

HARTLEY Wintney lost to promotion-chasing rivals for the second week running as their own Evo-Stik South East promotion hopes were dented with back-to-back defeats.

The Row lost 3-1 at Hayes & Yeading on Saturday, a week after losing by the same scoreline to another play-off side in Chalfont St Peter.

The north east Hampshire side, out to avenge a heavy defeat in the reverse fixture earlier in the season, fell behind to a direct Hayes & Yeading side midway through the first half.

Laste Dombaxe headed the home side ahead, but Hartley were back on level terms in the final 10 minutes of the first period when a Dean Stow free kick beat the wall and goalkeeper Zaki Oualah.

However, two second half United goals did the damage as Hartley failed to get their effective passing game flowing.

Midfielder Scott Donnelly regained the hosts' lead on the hour with a fine half volley from the edge of the box that found the corner of the net.

The visitors responded well but, as they pressed for a late equaliser, Hayes made a speedy breakaway and Manny Duku made it 3-1 with a composed finish in stoppage time.

Hartley got back to winning ways with a 3-0 win at local rivals Fleet Town on Tuesday.

Paul Hodges unleashed a great strike into the bottom corner for the opener before Steven Duff added a second in first half stoppage time.

Construction site manager Nic Ciardini got the third in the second half to complete the win at Calthorpe Park.

Hartley are now fourth, just one point off the automatic places. They travel to ninth-placed Moneyfields on Saturday.

Justin Rose was in contention until Sunday battling with Tiger Woods for the lead

Final day disappointment

A DISAPPOINTING final day one-over par blew any chance of Justin Rose scooping his first title of the year at the Valspar Championship in Florida.

The North Hampshire golfer went into the final round in second place and a single shot off the lead as the world No 5 aimed to add to his victories in China, Turkey and Indonesia from the tail end of last season.

Rose finished tied fifth after failing to build on his tournament-best five-under 66 on Saturday on the Copperhead Course at Innisbrook.

The former Tylney Park and Hartley Wintney club member started his final day perfectly with a birdie on the first hole.

But 10 pars followed before two dropped shots on the 12th and 13th holes left him adrift of the leaders.

Par across his final five flags meant he failed to close the gap on Paul Casey, who is $1.17 million richer after capturing the Valspar Championship.

The Englishman was an unpopular winner after pipping Tiger Woods to the title by a shot as the American marked his return to the big leagues following surgery and admitting he might not play competitively again.

Rose is back in action this week at the Arnold Palmer Invitational in Orlando. He tees off on the 10th hole at 8.11am local time, 4.11am GMT.

Sports Shorts

Packing a punch

AMATEUR boxers representing England duked it out with a strong Wales team in front of 350 guests at the 18th Basingstoke Deane Charity International Boxing tournament on Friday.

Honours were even as both teams won three bouts at the Basingstoke Rotary Club fundraiser in the Hampshire Court Hotel.

Best boxer of the night was awarded to England debutant Owen Cooper who was involved in an all-action affair against the taller Connor Burns from Wales in the 69kg category.

Donte Dixon (60kg), Jimmy Sains (60kg), Scot Melvin (56kg), Harvey Smith (49kg) and Morgan Ansell (48kg) joined Cooper on team England.

Lead coach Amanda Coulson said: "This was a great night of competitive boxing involving six boxers who have been invited onto the England Boxing Talent Pathway following their successful performances in the Youth Championships."

The Rotary Club event raised nearly £20,000 for Hampshire charities, including Basingstoke-based Ark Cancer Centre.

Buffs lose again

A NARROW 2-1 defeat at Bristol Pitbulls made it a hat-trick of defeats for Basingstoke Buffalo.

The loss made it three defeats on the spin and, more significantly, 13 defeats in 14 games.

Bristol took a third minute lead before Oscar Evans equalised for the Buffs 11 minutes from time. But Giovanni Raffaelli scored his second of the afternoon for the Pitbulls to snatch the win on 54 minutes.

Buffalo visit seventh-place Slough Jets on Saturday.

First-half misery

TWO first half goals condemned Whitchurch United to a seventh consecutive league defeat.

Lewis Beale (12 minutes) and Josh Smith (33) got the goals for United Services Portsmouth who eased passed United at the Victory Stadium on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Tadley Calleva's game against Fawley was postponed.

They host Ringwood Town on Saturday while Whitchurch travel to New Milton Town.

The latter host Downton on Monday before Tadley are back in action at home to Folland Sports on Tuesday.

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Inside: Smart move nets points | Final day disappointment as Rose goes close | Hartley suffer second defeat in promotion battle

Bison claim league title after putting out a lacklustre Fire

By George Welch

THE treble dream is still on for Basingstoke Bison after emphatically beating Cardiff Fire 8-1 in their final league game of the campaign to clinch the league title.

It was a busy weekend for the Herd who lost 3-1 at home to Swindon Wildcats in the first leg of the Autumn Cup final on Friday before cruising to a 10-1 victory over Invicta Dynamos the next day.

Bison went into their third game in three days against Cardiff knowing that a win would be enough for the South 1 (Britton) crown as they had a superior goal difference to nearest rivals Peterborough Phantoms.

Peterborough, on an eight-match winning streak, ran 'Stoke close but their narrow 6-4 win over Streatham on Saturday was not convincing enough to really pressure the Hampshire side.

Thanks to their pair of convincing wins, Bison finished with a goal difference of 96 compared with Phantoms 90.

Proud head coach Doug Sheppard was delighted with the first piece of silverware this season.

He said: "I don't think anybody would have predicted this in late September but when you've got a talented group full of character anything is possible.

"I couldn't be more proud of the guys and the way we stuck together and got the job done on the last weekend of the season."

Goals against Cardiff came from Aaron Connolly (11 & 47 minutes), Stuart Mogg (26), Roman Malinik (30), Tomas Karpov (33 & 37), Ivan Antonov (42) and Joshua Smith (59).

Sheppard thanked the fans and insisted they enjoy the taste of victory until the second leg of the cup fixture against Swindon on Friday.

"I want to thank our fans who've been amazing all season," he said.

"Saturday was an amazing effort from the fans and it was terrific to see so many fans travel to Cardiff to celebrate the title with us and sticking around after to congratulate us all.

"I hope everyone involved with the Bison enjoys this moment for a short while and then we get back to business Friday in Swindon ahead of launching our play-offs."

It is another three-game weekend for Bison who travel to Swindon on Friday before a double header against Invicta Dynamos in the play-offs. Bison are at home on Saturday before travelling to Gillingham on Sunday.

Bison players celebrate winning the league title after their 3-1 victory in Cardiff on Sunday
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Rounding off a great weekend

By George Welch

GRANT Rounding netted his first hat-trick of the season as Basingstoke Bison cruised passed Invicta Dynamos and into the last four of the South 1 play-offs.

The Herd eased to a 6-0 home win against the Gillingham side on Saturday before a 7-1 victory in Kent the following day for a 13-1 aggregate thrashing.

Rounding's treble in the second leg set up a semi-final tie against London Raiders this weekend, with the first leg on Saturday in Romford followed by the home leg the following day.

The forward struck in each period for his first triple of the 2017/18 campaign. Goals from Daniel Scott and Roman Malinik and a brace from Tomas Karpov rounded off an easy Sunday afternoon for Bison.

That came after hitting the same opposition for six the day before.

Another Karpov double and strikes from Kurt Reynolds and Stuart Mogg put Bison 4-0 up before the final period.

Malinik and birthday boy Ryan Sutton finished off the scoring in the final six minutes.

But 'Stoke's dreams of a treble are over after losing their two-legged Autumn Cup final. They lost 4-2 at Swindon Wildcats on Friday, losing 7-3 on aggregate.

All focus will now be on the next round of the play-offs against the Raiders who finished fourth in South 1, 19 points behind league winners Bison.

Head coach Doug Sheppard insists his side have put the cup disappointment behind them and are raring to go in the play-off semi-finals.

He said: "We've got London for the semi-final and we cannot underestimate them. They've finished above us in the league table and knocked out from the play-offs a former EPL team so they have no fear of the big games.

Daniel Scott, who found the back of the net in the second leg against Invicta Dynamos, tries his luck in the first leg. Picture: grantkingphotography.com

"We know they'll be ready for big games this weekend and we know we need to be ready and at our best while taking nothing for granted."

The London side beat Bracknell Bees 10-7 on aggregate.

The other semi-final features league runners-up Peterborough Phantoms taking on cup winners Swindon Wildcats.

Row keep play-off hopes alive despite squandering lead

HARTLEY Wintney maintained their play-off aspirations with a 2-2 draw at fellow contenders Moneyfields, despite sacrificing the lead twice.

The game on the south coast was played in very difficult conditions, with players contending with a strong, freezing wind and a tough surface.

However, the Row warmed to the task and took a 14th minute lead when Steven Duff powerfully headed home from 12 yards.

It was another header that levelled the scores on the cusp of half time, this time Sam Pearce nodding into the net for the hosts.

Hartley regained the lead on 55 minutes with a goal of quality when Paul Hodges chested down a Nic Ciardini header and fired into the net from 12 yards.

The Hampshire side were wasteful in front of goal though and were made to rue missed chances when, four minutes from the end, Steve Hutchings forced home an equaliser at the second attempt.

Joint manager Anthony Millerick was satisfied with the result under the circumstances.

He said: "The conditions definitely were always going to suit Moneyfields' direct style of play. That said, we had enough chances to win comfortably."

The draw meant Hartley slipped to fifth in the Evo-Stik South East table.

They host leaders AFC Rushden & Diamonds on Saturday before another home game against Aylesbury (18th) on Tuesday.

Rose tees up encouraging signs ahead of the Masters

A NIGHTMARE opening six holes at the Arnold Palmer Invitational cost Justin Rose his first title of the year.

But the north Hampshire golfer fought back and carded under par in all four rounds to finish third in Florida, four shots off winner Rory McIlroy.

Teeing off on the 10th hole, Rose was four-over par at Bay Hill following a brutal half-a-dozen holes.

But the former Tylney Park and Hartley Wintney club member, in arguably the form of his life, dusted himself off and surged up the leaderboard.

He responded with seven birdies to salvage the first round before carding one-under in a rollercoaster second day.

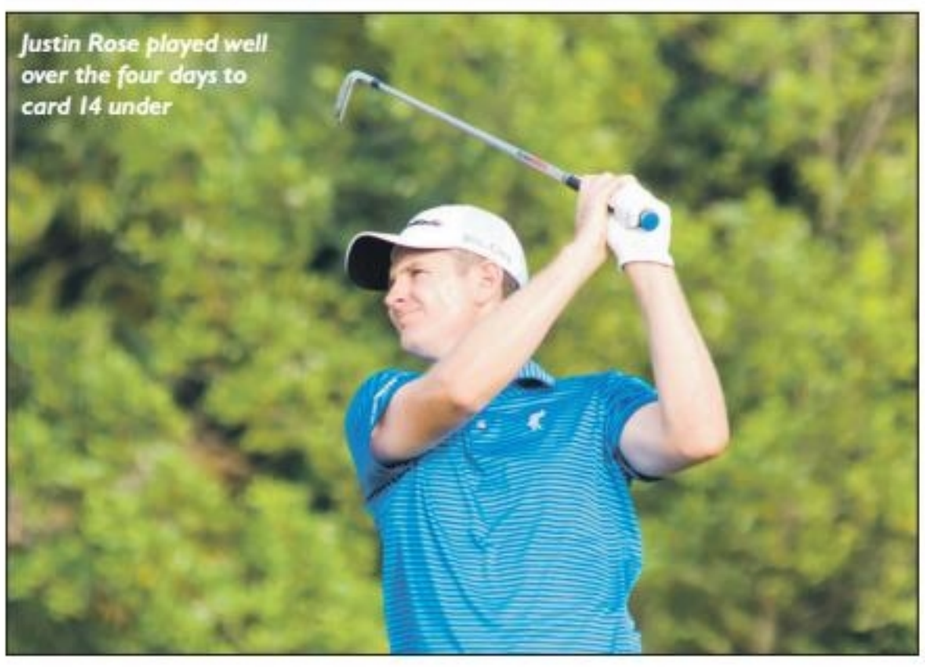
Rose made his move and announced himself as a contender on day three with an impressive five-under.

Heading into the final round in fourth place and three shots off the lead, the 37-year-old knew he was in with a shot.

Another round of 67 followed for Rose, but he could not match his playing partner, the red-hot McIlroy who stormed to victory with an eye-popping 64, winning on 18 under.

Rose has finished 1, T5, T8, T37, T5, and 3 in his last six PGA Tour starts, with a T10 on the European Tour sprinkled in between.

The Rio Olympic gold medallist pulled out of this week's prestigious WGC Dell Match-Play Championship citing the event not to be ideal for his Masters preparations. The first major of the season runs from April 5-8.



Justin Rose played well over the four days to card 14 under

Sports Shorts

Hat-trick heroes

TWO hat-tricks helped Tadley Calleva reignite their promotion hopes as the north Hampshire side ran riot in their first win in six league matches.

James Tennant and Brett Denham both struck a trio of goals and Daryll Phillips grabbed another in a 7-0 home win against Ringwood Town on Saturday.

The Tadders, whose recent poor form has seen them slip to sixth in Wessex Division One, had their Tuesday night game at home to bottom club Folland Sports postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

Fellow Hampshire side Whitchurch United's winless run was stretched to nine league matches with a 1-1 draw at New Milton Town on Saturday.

Their game at home to Downton on Monday was postponed.

United (15th) host United Services Portsmouth (5th) on Saturday while Tadley entertain Hythe & Dibden (14th). Tadley also travel to Fawley on Tuesday (11th).

Play-off hopes fade

THE play-offs are mathematically out of reach for struggling Basingstoke Buffalo after losing their fourth game in a row.

Saturday's 4-1 defeat at Slough Jets means they are five points off eighth place in the South 2 (Wilkinson) division with just two games remaining.

Blair Dubyk scored late on for the Buffs but it was nothing more than a consolation.

The development side travel to winless Lee Valley Lions on Sunday before hosting third-placed Chelmsford Chieftains on April 8.

KP signs out

FORMER Hampshire and England cricketer Kevin Pietersen said "ciao" to the sport on Saturday.

The 37-year-old former England captain had been playing for Quetta Gladiators in the Twenty20 Pakistan Super League but chose not to travel for a play-off in the United Arab Emirates.

He took to social media to reveal his decision. Pietersen wrote: "Lots asking what I'm going to do next. I'm going to take the same passion & hard work into trying to save rhinos from extinction."

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Inside: Bison inflict misery on Invicta | Rose in good form ahead of The Masters | Hartley concede lead twice before 2-2 draw

Stoke lead the charge to win against league-leading Bulls

By George Welch

THE performance of the season earned Basingstoke Town a magnificent 3-1 win over league leaders Hereford at the Camrose on Saturday.

A Shane Hollamby goal sandwiched by Sam Argent and Sam Smart goals at the very start and end of the match caused the upset, extending the Dragons' home winning run to seven matches.

Town's biggest crowd of the season, 704, saw the home side condemn the Bulls to their second consecutive defeat.

"You have to say that's the best result by a mile [this season], playing what I think is the best team in the league," a jubilant Terry Brown said.

"They will go on to win it, they're having a bit of a hiccup and we have caught them at the right time.

"We came up trumps. I can only commend the back three in particular because I thought they were terrific against prolific goal scorers. Everybody put their bodies on the line."

The 'Stoke boss added: "It's lovely to be a manager looking after a very talented bunch of boys. Let's hope they maintain this until the end of the year."

Basingstoke were outclassed in a 4-1 defeat in December's reverse fixture, leading Brown to describe the match as 'men against boys', but this time they were more organised and held on to their early lead.

Town kicked off against a strong bitterly cold wind and driving snow but enjoyed a dream start when Argent fired the ball into the roof of the net after just 70 seconds.

The visitors responded with dominance but, despite Mike Symonds heading against the bar, could not beat the superb Basingstoke backline.

Hereford continued to control the game and introduced leading goal scorer John Mills.

However, it was a defender who pulled the Bulls level as Jordan Liburd headed home on 64 minutes.

Basingstoke refused to roll over though and regained the lead 13 minutes later when Hollamby volleyed in at the back post from a corner.

Hereford hunted an equaliser, Billy Murphy and Jennison Myrie-Williams going close, but the home side secured the points in the final minute with a lovely Smart strike.

Basingstoke's home game against Bishops Stortford on Tuesday night was postponed due to a snow covered pitch.

Town (10th) will hope for better weather when they welcome Slough Town (5th) to the Camrose on Saturday. They travel to second-placed King's Lynn Town on Tuesday.

Shane Hollamby powers on towards his goal amid a melee of Hereford players to score Town's second on the way to a good 3-1 victory against table-topping Hereford. Picture: Steve Gridley

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Newspaper House, 4A Hawksworth, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HR.
Telephone 01235 511700 (Head Office).
Printed by Iliffe Print Cambridge, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BASINGSTOKE OBSERVER

Meet, network and grow at Basingstoke Business Expo

THE region's biggest gathering of local businesses is taking place today offering thriving industries the opportunity to put themselves in the spotlight.

More than 50 exhibitors will be at Basingstoke Business Expo 2018 with in excess of 400 visitors expected to attend.

Held at the Apollo Hotel, the event will feature a wide range of businesses from individuals to SMEs, start ups to established firms.

Among those exhibiting are Versatile Motor Company, Lamb Brooks Solicitors, A-Plan Insurance, Digital House and Eagle Radio.

The free-to-attend event enables access to entrepreneurs from all sizes of business.

Event organisers, Neal Purvey and Julie Corlett, are passionate about ensuring Basingstoke businesses make the most of the opportunities

BASINGSTOKE BUSINESS expo2018
22 March | The Apollo Hotel

to meet, to network, to collaborate and to grow.

Neal and Julie also run the online directory, The Best of Basingstoke, listing, promoting and marketing reputable businesses across the local area.

The 'buy local' movement is important to many and through both the site and this expo they hope to communicate the variety and strength of business opportunities Basingstoke has to offer.

As well as the exhibitors, there are a variety of speakers and the seminar timetable is packed with informative and engaging talks.

Starting at 10.35am and running through until the end of the day, speakers include Mitch Lloyd owner of Petra Jewellery, who will be sharing how a change of thinking led to serious growth for her business; Tim Savage award winning business coach will uncover the reasons why business owners get stuck and don't make progress; and Faith Ruto from Transformation 21st, who will be explaining how to capitalise on different types and phases of change.

Although non-exhibitors are not permitted to actively promote their businesses, an activity exclusively for those exhibiting, the organisers do very much encourage attendees to bring along plenty of business cards to share when appropriate.

Specifically, there is a speed networking session, taking place from 12pm-12.30pm, hosted by Hampshire Chamber of Commerce. Spaces are limited, however, there are also further networking opportunities through the designated networking zones and the networking wall.

Having signed in at the registration area visitors will be given a copy of the show guide, listing the exhibitors, the seminar programme and key information to help plan the day.

There is parking at the hotel venue and the event organisers have also arranged a free park and ride service from Basingstoke Leisure Park, running every 30 minutes.

Those who use this service will be rewarded with a voucher for a free tea or coffee.

For those attending the event, the hotel will also be providing a pop up networking café, where hot and cold drinks, a selection of sandwiches and snacks will be available for purchase throughout the day.

Visitors are advised to arrive early and make the most out of this important event.

More information is also available via the website - ww.b2bexpos.co.uk/basingstoke.

"We are passionate about supporting businesses based in Basingstoke and, importantly, spreading the 'buy local' message"

Event organiser Neal Purvey

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE...

● UPCOMING EVENTS ● Q&As ● NEWS FROM SMEs ● FINANCE
● MARKETING ● PROPERTY ● BUSINESS OFFERS ● BUSINESS SERVICES

It's all about MEES – new standard for landlords to meet

Kathleen Tingle and Hannah Clark

LANDLORDS could face fines of up to £150,000 if their rented property fails to meet the Government's new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations.

These come into force on April 1 and will mean anyone letting a domestic or commercial property with an energy efficiency rating of 'F' or below could incur fines per property.

However, opportunities exist as well for landlords to reduce costs and improve the value of their property interests.

Focusing on commercial lettings, Kathryn Johns, a Commercial Property Solicitor at Phillips, said: "For 10 years, landlords have been obliged to provide Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) to tenants, which enabled them to make an informed decision on the potential energy costs of the properties they occupied.

"However, there was no limitation on letting properties with ratings of F or G. The new regime will only permit landlords to let properties with ratings of A to E."

Kathryn advises that in some limited circumstances the regulations will not apply. Properties used for holiday lets or temporary buildings do not require EPCs and therefore would not be affected by the regulations, and properties subject to lettings of less than six months (unless the tenant

Kathryn Johns

has occupied the property for more than one year or there are renewal provisions drafted into the tenancy) or tenancies with terms of more than 99 years will also be excluded.

Even if the regulations do apply, Kathryn also highlights the fact that some exemptions drafted into the regulations may mean that landlords and tenants are not required to take any further steps to comply with the regulations. These include a devaluation of the property by more than five per cent, a failure to recoup the cost of necessary works via estimated lower energy bills over a period of seven years and an inability to obtain the necessary consent for the required works, such as from a freeholder or lender.

There are long-term positives of the new legislation. Kathryn says: "While it may seem onerous at first, a review of a landlord's property portfolio or a tenant's lease could yield valuable opportunities for both parties, such as lower energy bills for tenants, improvements in the overall standard of a property through well-planned capital expenditure and potential preservation of capital value for a landlord.

"A surveyor's report, a new set of EPCs or a comprehensive lease review for landlords and tenants could unearth some hidden treasure."

With further measures due in April 2023, prohibiting the continued letting of commercial and residential properties with a rating of 'F' or 'G'(even if a tenant continues to occupy a property without a new formal tenancy agreement) and higher efficiency standards likely to follow, businesses should take precautionary steps now to avoid further costs later.

For advice on the MEES regulations or any other commercial property matter, contact Kathryn on 01256 854674 or email kathryn.johns@phillips-law.co.uk

Two new solicitors at Phillips

LEADING Basingstoke law firm Phillips Solicitors is expanding with the appointment of two new solicitors.

In recent weeks the firm in London Street, has taken on Kathleen Tingle and Hannah Clark to support its expansion.

Kathleen is a solicitor in the firm's employment law team offering her expertise to employers in a wide range of areas from the drafting of employment contracts, policies, procedures, handbooks and settlement agreements to general employment advice on the day to day issues that challenge businesses. She also provides advice to employees on grievances, disciplinary issues, discrimination, equal pay, maternity and paternity matters, advising and negotiating on settlement agreement terms and employment tribunal claims.

Kathleen said: "I'm excited to be working for such a highly regarded and personable firm, which has an excellent reputation for its employment law services not only in Hampshire, but across Berkshire and Surrey too."

Delighted to have Kathleen on board, Gill Brown, head of the employment law team said: "Kathleen's approach is very much in-line with the way we look after our clients at Phillips.

"We like to get to know our clients and gain an understanding of what they are seeking to achieve, so that in addition to advising them on the law, we can provide practical and workable solutions for them to achieve their goals as quickly as possible."

Hannah is a solicitor in the firm's Wills and Probate team where her work includes drafting wills, creating and registering Lasting Powers of Attorney and probate and estate administration.

Hannah, who takes pride in providing support in a friendly and understandable manner, said: "I very much enjoy helping people get their property and financial affairs in order and advising them on everything from drafting wills to estate planning, giving our clients confidence and peace of mind."

Caroline Wallis who heads the wills and probate team said: "Hannah shares our passion for high standards of client care. The growth of our wills and probate team is testament to the quality of work and reflects the growing demand for our services."

Hannah has recently become an Associate Member of the Solicitors for the Elderly and is a specialist in providing legal advice to elderly and vulnerable people.

To find out more about Phillips Solicitors and its legal service visit www.phillips-law.co.uk or call 01256 460830.

Wote Street People

Recruitment in Basingstoke

01256 799127

wotestreetpeople.co.uk

Finding the right people for you

IT'S all about the brand – no trouble! Heard it on the grapevine...and other bad song analogies.

One of the reasons the Basingstoke Expo is so popular is that it allows local companies to get their brand out there and meet other businesses who may need their services or indeed to find suppliers themselves.

Here at Wote Street People, we measure how people find us and ask why they made that initial contact. 41% of people contacted us because they had heard good things about us, compared to 18% who had seen a job advert that they wanted to apply for.

What can potential employees find out about your company? And what do current and ex-staff say? One undisputed universal fact is that people talk, for better or for worse. As a nation, we do seem to be getting better at complaining and with the advancement of social media, we can complain about anything to anyone at the press of button. Be aware that websites like www.glassdoor.co.uk also allow people to review and rate their workplace – and it's all public.

Don't be an empty shop front

Candidates are certainly becoming more and more savvy when asking themselves, "where do I want to work?" But to turn that question around: what qualities are you looking to attract? Talking to our Clients, it became apparent that the right attitude and integrity were high on everyone's list. But to simply ask for those qualities in a job advert might sound vague.

What we say about our brands in the wider world must be backed up with substance; we can't just be an empty shop front. And we're not just talking about offering benefits like health and pensions; it's got to be cultural. As a recruitment agency in Basing View, some of the questions we often hear are "can you offer flexible working?", "can I continue to learn?" and "what's the parking like?"

More than just a mission statement

Identify what your company needs, otherwise how can you translate it to your potential employees? Achieve this level of company self-actualisation with communication; practice what you preach. Don't spend hours thinking up glib, meaningless mission statements, just show people the reasons why your business is a great place to work. Be honest, be open.

One example is Apple. When you walk in to an Apple store, it reflects what it might be like to work there. If that environment intimidates or bores you – you wouldn't apply for a job with them, but if you love the Apple brand and their products – you'd head straight home to refine your CV.

So, when you're recruiting for jobs in Basingstoke, get the personality of your company across. Show candidates the true flavour of your company so that the right ones naturally head your way and you deter those that aren't a good match – saving you time and money.

Need help attracting the right kind of talent for your business? Or want to know more about our peer group where local employers have the chance to network and discuss employment issues?

Wote Street People is a recruitment agency in Basing View and we're here to help you find the right staff, the smart way. Call us on 01256 799127.

Keeping Purple Flag flying

BASINGSTOKE town centre is celebrating after it received official recognition and retained its Purple Flag status for excellence in managing its evening and night time economy for a fifth consecutive year.

Purple Flag is a town and city centre award – similar to the Blue Flag for beaches and Green Flag for parks – which aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 6pm and 5am.

Town centres are assessed on a range of criteria including attractiveness and appeal, cleanliness, personal safety, how welcoming they are, and how well partners, such as the police, council and the licensed trade, work together towards shared improvement goals.

This is the first year that Basingstoke Together has led the Purple Flag accreditation. The BID worked in conjunction with several key partners; all of whom contribute to a safer evening economy. Partner organisations included Hampshire Constabulary, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Anvil Arts, Festival Place, Basingstoke Street Pastors and Pubwatch.

Lucy Boazman, chief executive of Basingstoke Together said: "Securing the Purple Flag accreditation for Basingstoke is another example of partnership working at its best.

"We have a fantastic offering of clubs, bars, cinema, theatres and restaurants and we can continue to promote the safe and vibrant environment our visitors can experience.

"The hard work definitely doesn't stop here, and we remain committed to ensuring Basingstoke continues to be a first-choice destination where people come to shop, dine and play."

From left, flying the flag for a great safe night out in Basingstoke are: Sergeant Trevor Taylor - Hampshire Constabulary; Paul Sawyer, finance manager at Festival Place; Carol Freeman, owner of Tonic; David Rushbrook , corporate relationships director at Barclays Bank; Rebecca Handley, deputy chief executive at Basingstoke Together; Andy Taylor, Street Pastor; Sophy Brough, licensing officer at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council; PC Christian Reid Milligan - Hampshire Constabulary

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's cabinet member for housing, regeneration, arts and heritage Councillor Terri Reid hailed it as fanastic news the town centre had again been awarded the Purple Flag.

She said: "It has been a real partnership effort to make the sure the town centre is a vibrant destination with evening and late-night activities that appeal to all age ranges, tastes and interests and Purple Flag award recognises this."

Sarah Walker Purple Flag programme manager at the ATCM said: "There are now over 70 towns and cities across the UK and Ireland who are proudly flying the Purple Flag after working hard to gain accreditation.

"The award is not just about safety, but also the vibrancy and diversity of the evening and night-time offer — this can only be achieved by people working together in a strong partnership to which we are seeing great examples of across the country"

Organisations helping skilled people get back into business

BASINGSTOKE recruitment agency Wote Street People and local community charity, M3 Job Club, are collaborating to help support experienced skilled people get back into work.

The two organisations are committed to guiding a pool of local mature people, who have lost their jobs or have been made redundant, towards discovering new opportunities.

Since its launch seven years ago, M3 Job Club has supported more than 550 people back into work. It holds a series of weekly meetings which are coaching-led sessions that give members invaluable information, help to build confidence, provide the tools and techniques during their job search.

Maxine Hart, Wote Street People's operations director, a trustee of the M3 Job Club, sees the Business Expo as the ideal opportunity to tell employers about the club's work and the contribution it makes to the local business economy.

M3 Job Club, run entirely by business volunteers, is funded by a grant from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and assistance from the Big Lottery Fund. It relies on its alumni, local businesses and individuals to help it carry on its work.

For more information about M3 Job Club, visit https://m3jobclub.co.uk/

M3 Job Club

HR support success built on networking

VIVOHR has been offering HR support to small and medium-sized businesses in north Hampshire since 2011, and in the last 18 months has gone from strength to strength.

In late 2016 vivoHR took the move to incorporate as a limited company and also had the great fortune to meet one of the M3 Growth Hub business advisers at a Basingstoke networking event run by Matthew Larcombe of BSB Expos.

The M3 Growth Hub has provided vivoHR's director Sam Swinstead with business coaching which has supported her to develop the business in several ways.

Firstly, with financial assistance from schemes offered to support learning and development, one member of the team Rachel is now half-way through completing HR Qualifications in both the CIPD Level 3 and an NVQ in Personnel Management.

Secondly Sam has expanded the business by recruiting Clair who joined vivoHR as an HR consultant in January. Clair is already CIPD Level 5 qualified and has hit the ground running as she is already busy providing HR support services and HR management training to numerous small businesses in the area. Sam has plans to recruit a fourth member of the team later this year.

Finally, the business coaching provided by M3 Growth Hub has enabled Sam to create a marketing plan and to identify another trusted local business to outsource the vivoHR marketing activity to.

From left, Rachel Goodman, HR advisor; Sam Swinstead HR consultant & business owner and Clair Gilbert, HR consultant at vivoHR

Sam attributes much of vivoHR's recent success to its local networking where they have met clients and suppliers, as well as making many useful contacts for the business. This will also be the third year exhibiting at the Basingstoke Business Expo which attracts a large number of business visitors throughout the day.

Sam and her team will be at the Basingstoke Expo on March 22 – be sure to visit them at Stand 11 as they will be happy to answer any HR queries you might have and they are promising to have some of the best giveaways on the day.

Sam is also presenting the seminar at 1.35pm where she will answer "7 questions for sure fire success as an employer!"

Are you wearing too many hats in your business?

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vivoHR is a modern, forward thinking HR consultancy. We work with businesses that truly understand the value of their people and want to get things right. We help to recruit, engage, manage and develop the very best people for the job as well as ensuring your legal compliance.

Designing ways for you to increase customers

IT is estimated people are exposed to thousands of advertising messages each day, and as any business owner knows, standing out from your competitors can make a big difference in the number of enquiries you receive, whether you win a sale and whether you get repeat business.

At Abstract Print & Design focusing on the three customer touchpoints, what we like to call customer journey, has been hugely significant for our business and we now want to share the expertise we have developed to help you use design and print to get, keep and find more customers.

When thinking about your customer journey, there are three important aspects to consider:

The team from Abstract Print & Design can help raise your company's profile

How you generate leads

The activity you do will be a major way to generate enquiries for your business and thinking about how you use design and print effectively could give you the edge over your competitors.

There is a theory that someone needs to see your logo in seven different settings before they recognise it. Therefore having a distinctive logo and design that makes you stand out will help people to recognise you more quickly.

If you have business cards, leaflets, a business premises or branded vehicles, think about how they help people to recognise your brand.

How you convert enquiries to sales

How do you respond to an enquiry – do you have a published price list for your product or services, or do you provide a proposal or quote in response to a meeting? How much thought have you given to how this information is presented?

If you charge a premium price does your price list also explain the value that you offer, or if you are providing a printed quotation do you simply send it by email and wait for a response? Would posting the quotation in a branded folder with a handwritten note reflect the quality of the products or service you offer in a better way. Why not go a step further and send samples of your product, a case study or testimonials in the post to follow the quote to make it more enticing to a potential customer.

How you keep customers and get them to refer business to you

It is said that it costs six to seven times more to acquire a new customer that keep an existing one so what do you do to encourage repeat business or people to recommend you to their customers?

Have you thought about how you could create a 'wow' moment – even as simple as providing quality chocolates free at the end of a meal or a small gift at the end of a project can show that you have put some thought into your customers and you are thanking them for spending their money with you. And how do you keep in touch with customers and encourage them to come back? Do you have a loyalty card or ask customers to recommend a friend?

Do you follow up all customers and ask for customer reviews or testimonials as standard that you can then use to help you stand out?

If you want to know more come along to Stand 46 at Basingstoke Expo or visit www.abstractprintanddesign.co.uk

Inspiring you to thrive

ARE you looking for a inspirational speaker and change coach in Basingstoke?

Transformation21st Limited is empowering professionals and business owners to thrive through change.

Transformation21st is an innovative personal change consultancy offering 1:1 coaching, group coaching, networking events and public speaking services to individuals and businesses in Basingstoke and beyond.

Transformation21st are experts at increasing self-confidence, change resilience and career clarity.

■ Are you hosting an event and need an inspirational, motivational public speaker?

■ Are you struggling to see opportunity through times of change (personal and business life)?

Faith Ruto who has more than 15 years experience delivering motivational talks at events of all sizes, leading global change and IT projects founded Transformation21st to help you and inspire you on your business journey.

Improve the resilience and increase the productivity of your team with bespoke events and workshops hosted by Transformation21st – they will empower you to thrive instead of just surviving.

Call 01256 213 091 or email info@transformation21st.com to arrange a half hour complimentary consultation today

For more information on our services, visit www.transformation21st.com

Transformation21st run a monthly lunch, learn and networking events at Worting House.

To attend, please email info@transformation21st.com

Come and hear Faith Ruto speak at the Basingstoke Expo.

Faith Ruto can help with 1:1 and group coaching

"Faith is a wonderfully warm and caring person, which is one of the reasons why she does so well in motivating and setting people on the right track with her uplifting, informative talks and engaging discussions. Thank you Faith, looking forward to the next opportunity."

Ashley Vincent Photography

Serviced offices at affordable rates in the idylic location of Worting Park.

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Why not come and have a look around?
Call us on 01256 817640 for more information.

Worting House, Church Lane, Basingstoke, RG23 8PX www.wortinghouse.co.uk

A great place to do business

THANKS to a considerable upgrade of its premises over the last three years, clients are now able to benefit from Worting House's new 1GB leased line and reliable Firewall security.

As one of north Hampshire's premier business locations, the new services give clients access to much faster and more secure internet - an essential for all businesses and business people today.

There are also secure air conditioned server rooms with enhanced power supplies to suit most modern IT requirements.

Worting House gives an opportunity for a wide variety of local, national and international businesses to benefit from quality serviced office solutions.

With dedicated offices and hot desks, plus a variety of informal break out space – it is a great place to do business.

Businesses based here have free use of the hot desks at all times giving space for visitors, clients and advisers.

Non-resident businesses also have the opportunity to hold meetings and events at Worting House's inspirational location. Through its combination of friendly professional staff, historic setting and state of the art business facilities, the venue has built a strong reputation for supporting the local business community.

With meeting rooms designed to cater for four to 32 people, Worting House's range of layouts can accommodate a multitude of business purposes and budgets. From board meetings to supplier presentations, interviews to company training days, all meeting rooms make great use of natural daylight and are designed with space and free-thinking in mind.

"I have been resident at Worting House for over five years and use most of the facilities including the training rooms, lunch and buffet services and can advise that the overall service received and accommodation that's available is at a high level. Julie and the team always seek to find ways to make the experience trouble-free. Added value at its best!"

Geoff Kontzle - Managing Director
K3 Consulting & Training Services Ltd

Visitors to Worting House's meeting and training rooms are also able to make use of a variety of other equipment including an interactive training screen with full TV and computer capabilities, in addition to a range of audio and video equipment, plus the more usual facilities such as the traditional flip charts.

There's also free inclusive refreshments, together with executive catering available on request – all adding up to making every visit extra special.

Worting House has long enjoyed a reputation for offering businesses first-class facilities. Its serviced office solutions are recognised as representing exceptional value for money, with no long-term financial commitments making Worting House a very attractive base for many small and medium-sized businesses, not to mention an ideal step up from working from home.

Worting House manager, Julie Kehoe-Smith, said: "Our latest investments to improve our internet and IT capability for all residents of Worting House builds on the professional and friendly services our staff and facilities already provide for so many businesses.

"With easy access by train or car and plenty of free parking, Worting House has further enhanced its reputation as one of Basingstoke and north Hampshire's most attractive, professional and convenient places to do business."

Businesses interested in having a look around or arranging their next meeting or event at Worting House are invited to visit www.wortinghouse.co.uk or call Julie on 01256 817640.

WORTING HOUSE

DISCOVER YOUR LOCAL FAMILY JEWELLERS AT THE VIABLES CRAFT CENTRE, BASINGSTOKE

Sharing the Sparkle

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Find us at the Viables Craft Centre, Basingstoke. Viables

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Bring your jewellery box in to see one of our design team and together we will design something you'll love, using your old gold and even recycling old stones too. Prices start from £200.

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01256 213073

Sharing the sparkle SINCE 1979

"I've been going to Petra's for years now. I love the design process...

Mitch always starts off showing me designs they have in the shop and doing sketches, talking me through all the options until I'm happy with the look and the cost!

Adrian x "

"I just love doing this. Last year I recycled four very precious rings to me. I wear it all the time and have fantastic compliments on it.

Thanks to Petra's xx

ps. I'm onto the next project now with Laura.

Sue x "

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Petra Jewellery

Lamb Brooks' guide to the 'gig economy'

THE Lamb Brooks Business Team provides practical and pro-active advice for businesses in Basingstoke and beyond.

Working with a broad spectrum of businesses, charities and organisations the team adopts a positive can-do approach putting Lamb Brooks out in front as the business law team of choice.

Incorporating the knowledge and experience from the company and commercial, employment law and commercial property departments ensures that clients are given a comprehensive legal service that takes care of every aspect of their business. Whatever your requirements the Lamb Brooks Business Team has the experience and expertise.

An area some clients are concerned about at the moment is the 'gig economy', as employment tribunals, media and the public have thrown a number of companies' practices under the spotlight. So where do you stand if you pay for labour in the gig economy?

The typical 'gig' business model is centred on the 'employing' company acting as a 'go-between', linking the customer and contractor fulfilling the work. App-based systems are a frequent feature often making work opportunities available, allocating work once accepted and taking payment from customers.

More cases are emerging showing that companies seeking to adopt the gig model are falling foul of the body of employment case law relating to employment status.

The Lamb Brooks business team can guide you through this new field

While the likelihood of a gigger being found to be an 'employee' is slim, the prospect of them being deemed a 'worker' is more of a risk because of the lower evidential hurdle.

Although worker status is determined on a case-by-case basis companies wishing to 'go gig' should avoid acting in a way which is inconstant to self-employed working status, for example:

- don't impose an onerous recruitment and induction process;
- don't assume that because the contract labels the relationship as one of self-employed status this will be sufficient to stave off litigation;
- a right for a gigger to substitute themselves for someone else will not absolve the company of imposing a contractual obligation to provide personal service unless that right is unfettered;
- don't seek to integrate the giggers into the business – e.g. avoid requirements for company branding to be used;
- don't try to control how and when a gigger performs their work;
- ensure that giggers are responsible for submitting their own invoices;
- don't impose minimum working hours or make it impossible to avoid them; and
- don't seek to withhold end user information from the gigger.

The consequences of a worker status finding for a gig economy company involves a potentially hefty bill in respect to unpaid holiday pay, minimum wage, maternity or paternity pay and sanctions for failures to comply with the Working Time Regulations. With more cases yet to be heard and current cases awaiting appeal outcomes it's a racing certainty this will continue to be a developing area of employment law.

To see how we can help or for any information on our business team services call 01256 305516 or email business.team@lambbrooks.com

Making your business count

PROVIDING professional and proactive services with personal care forms the basis of what Berkshire Accountants Ltd is all about.

Based on London Street in Reading and with a second office in Tilehurst, they provide accountancy, taxation and audit services to their clients mainly based in Berkshire and other parts of the UK.

Berkshire Accountants Ltd are chartered certified accountants and registered auditors.

The team led by director Shahzad Niazi help clients become organised and profitable and have a remarkable record of tax savings for them.

The clients are diverse businesses from start up, small to medium size businesses. They provide services from bookkeeping to company accounts and from taxation to company audit. For more details, visit http://berkshire-accountants.com/our-services/

Currently, Berkshire Accountants Ltd is offering its clients (VAT registered businesses) a free cloud version of accounting software to make them compliant with 'Making Tax Digital (MTD)' effective from April 1 2019. This is a compulsory requirement for all VAT registered businesses to file the accounts quarterly to HM Revenue & Customs.

Berkshire Accountants Ltd are available throughout the year to their clients for tax related queries paying attention to all the clients' needs.

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A powerful support network

HAMPSHIRE Chamber of Commerce is a local business support organisation for all Hampshire business, from small start-up enterprises to multinational corporations.

To provide support for Hampshire business, we hold regular business events throughout the county as well as offering a number of business benefits, from a free legal helpline to discounted healthcare and a library of online HR documents.

As an accredited part of the wider network of the British Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber is part of a powerful and national business community, while still retaining a strong focus on local issues – and we put all of this back into making Hampshire a great place to do business.

We are also keeping Hampshire businesses informed of all the latest developments in the business world. On our website, you can find all the latest news about GDPR implementation, the progress of Brexit negotiations and a number of other important topics.

We will be located on stand number 8 at the Basingstoke Business Expo, where representatives of the Chamber will be happy to talk about how we can help your business with whatever support you need. In addition, we will be holding a speed networking session at 12pm to help attendees generate new contacts.

For full details of what the Chamber can offer and for a list of our upcoming events, please take a look at our website – www.hampshirechamber.co.uk. For more details about the Chamber, come speak to us at the Expo or email Julie at julie.eckersley@hampshirechamber.co.uk. We look forward to meeting and helping you!

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce can provide a range of support and advice for businesses of any size and whatever your requirements

HAMPSHIRE chamber of commerce

Put your payroll in pair of Safe Hands

MANY business owners are starting to plan for the new tax year. For businesses employing staff, managing costs will be high on the list of priorities.

In this, our first Safe Hands blog we suggest outsourcing payroll might be one of those cost saving measures to consider. Here's why:

Cost

An in-house payroll service costs more per employee, the fewer members of staff you have. Costs include person-hours spent on payroll, payroll software, training, printing and distributing payslips, enquiry-handling, related tax documents…the list goes on.

Resources

The payroll function can consume a large proportion of someone's time, especially if payroll in not their primary employed role. Outsourcing payroll frees up these resources, allowing your team to focus on developing your core business.

Training

Changes in tax and legislation can mean ongoing training expenses for payroll staff. Training at the outset on the payroll system and then training updates as the latest procedures and changes are implemented all add to creeping payroll costs.

Speed and accuracy

Experts, like Safe Hands, will undertake payroll for many clients. It stands to reason that with familiarity and repetition, the payroll process will be faster and 'right first time'. Sometimes a 'quicker than usual' turnaround time on payroll is required, especially when a client is very busy. We pull out all the stops when it's absolutely necessary.

Service continuity

The in-house service is only as good as the availability of the experts doing the work. Holidays and sickness during the year may mean losing a key member at an important time. Your staff will forgive a lot of things, but not paying them on time is not one of them! This headache is removed at a stroke when you outsource.

No need to worry

There's a lot to be said for the peace of mind that outsourcing payroll services can bring to a business. You're left to focus on running your business, knowing all payroll obligations are dealt with correctly and efficiently. In fact, if you've just decided that you don't want to do payroll yourself any more having read this – what other reason do you need to pick up the phone now?

With payroll from Safe Hands Bookkeeping, we become a virtual part of your team and your staff know their issues will be dealt with by somebody they know and trust.

To enquire about payroll services and to obtain a tailored quote for your business, contact: Jason Dalton, Safe Hands Bookkeeping on 01252 763123, email jason@safehandsbookkeeping.co.uk or got to the website at www.safehandsbookkeeping.co.uk

"A great asset to our business. We have received so much support from Jason and his team over time including helping us set up payroll, use a fantastic accounting app and general bookkeeping tips on a regular basis. He couldn't be more helpful and it's never too much trouble. It really is a great support for us to have Jason there as our safety net being a small business. Highly recommend."

Tara Morris, Abstract Print & Design

Giganet is helping get you online faster to help boost your business

Ultrafast Giganet rolls out across Basingstoke

M12 Solutions, the Hampshire based telecoms and internet connectivity provider, has launched a new brand Giganet in order to leverage the local roll out of updated fibre infrastructure.

Giganet is aiming to revolutionise internet connectivity for businesses and private users across Basingstoke, providing ultrafast speeds, competitive pricing and local award-winning support.

Giganet's investment in the Basingstoke and Winchester telephone exchanges means it can offer pure fibre connectivity to businesses in the surrounding area. M12 Solutions is optimistic this investment will help increase take up of services capable of up to a gigabit in speed (1000Mb/s). This news comes on the back of a recent EU Council report showing the UK significantly lags behind almost every other European country in 'fibre to the premises' (FTTP) penetration.

Technical director Matthew Skipsey says: "Over the past few months, we have invested considerably towards improving connectivity options for Hampshire based businesses. Premium internet connectivity has always been synonymous with a high price tag, but we are here to change that."

As well as businesses, there are around 550 homes in Basingstoke that already have fibre installed to their door due to recent Openreach work. The take up of this type of connection is also low.

Matthew said: "Take up of residential FTTP has typically been low due to a number of factors. The relative infancy of this technology and lack of wide scale deployment means many of the larger internet providers prefer to focus on the slower but more widely available 'fibre to the cabinet' (FTTC) rollout. Our arrival will provide some much-needed competition in this market."

To find out more about M12 Solutions' Giganet services visit www.giga.net.uk or call 0800 107 8888.

A unique holiday experience

ROMANIA has something for everyone, from children to adults, whether you want a relaxed holiday visiting one of our beautiful, medieval villages, or a more energetic break walking, skiing or driving through our forests and mountains.

Unique Romania has created tours and adventures designed to be different; encouraging and allowing visitors to see, feel and live the Romanian way of life for a short while, to experience its sights, sounds and tastes, to discover its culture, traditions and history, and to appreciate the beauty of Romania's landscapes and architecture.

From enjoying folk culture, barbecues and camp fires in one of our forest locations, to indulging in a luxurious spa hotel in Bucharest, we can create tours that provide whatever you want from your holiday, while seeing and experiencing everything that Romania has to offer.

Set up by sisters Carmen Lakatos and Ramona Burda, Unique Romania showcases their passion for their country and offers the opportunity to see and love the beauty of Romania.

Tours with Unique Romania are about more than just exploring the country and can be custom made according to your personal preferences, budget or time –they can create a holiday experience you will never forget.

Unique Romania offer a wide range of ways to discover and explore the very best Romania has to offer. It's fast becoming the European travel destination.

Start your unique adventure today - choose one of the pre-planned tours or a mix of them or ask for a custom-made holiday.

City breaks, sightseeing, spa breaks, walking tours, special event holidays, wineries, salt caves, hen and stag parties, the Danube Delta and the Black Sea are all waiting to be discovered.

And if legend is to be believed you may get to visit a medieval castle where Count Dracula lived.

For more information and details, look out for the stand at Basingstoke Expo or visit the website at uniqueromania.co.uk

Romania has something for everyone, from children to adults, whether you want a relaxed holiday visiting one of our beautiful, medieval villages, or a more energetic break walking, ski-ing or driving through our forests and mountains.

Our tours and adventures have been created to be different; encouraging and allowing visitors to see, feel and live the Romanian way of life for a short while, to experience its sights, sounds and tastes, to discover its culture, traditions and history, and to appreciate the beauty of Romania's landscapes and architecture.

From enjoying folk culture, barbecues and camp fires in one of our forest locations, to indulging in a luxurious spa hotel in Bucharest, we can create tours that provide whatever you want from your holiday, while seeing and experiencing everything that Romania has to offer.

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AT Versatile Motor Company we are proud to offer a large range of vehicle adaptions and driving aids to make life easier for mobility impaired drivers and passengers.

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We are always very willing and knowledgeable to assist you with whatever queries you have, giving a personal, friendly, yet professional service always.

For more information go to our website at versatilemotorco.com

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Motability Approved Adapters

How a brief encounter with marketing firm could help

Charlotte Basrby and Jo Cutting can help with all your company's marketing needs

BRIEF Marketing is a start up marketing company, based in Basingstoke, serving small and medium sized businesses in Hampshire and the South East.

It was formed by Charlotte Barsby and Jo Cutting, who first met in the early noughties and at that point were already a touch unusual in being: female science graduates, females in a tech company and selected onto Vodafone's elite Global Leadership Programme, designed to stretch and nurture future directors.

Their paths occasionally crossed over the years but it was as they both began families and worked on a voluntary basis teaching parents how to use baby slings and carriers that they realised that their joint skills could be useful to lots of people.

Fast forward through many cups of coffee, glasses of wine and a lot of Post It notes and Brief Marketing was born.

They've taken what the local market needs (lots of growing small businesses, lacking in time, budget or expertise) and what they have loads of (experience, pragmatism and flexible availability) and packaged it into a lovely set of propositions.

Brief Engagements start with a visit to get to know their customer's business problem – they ask a lot of questions. From this they propose how they can help solve it and on what basis, their clients think of them as a trusted member of their team.

Awesome Briefs are offered to clients who need to find, brief and manage a marketing specialist, while avoiding the time, effort and quality pitfalls of going to market blind. A service that acts as a guardian of investment.

Brief Encounters help customers to gain new skills, new contacts and new tools that increase their effectiveness immediately. A little like a 'marketing' personal trainer.

Brief Marketing held their first Brief Encounter – Marketing on March 9 at The Dove Inn Michelmarsh Station. They had four small to medium sized businesses, one B2B and three B2C, ranging from startups to established companies. The feedback was fantastic from all participants…

Gabriela Valicek-D'Arcy of EspressoPedia (www.bestitalliancoffee.co.uk/about-us) said: "This was very practical and full of fascinating information that got implemented into a real life plan to take away. This is priceless."

Adrien Nortier of Nortier Shallow (www.nortiershallow.com) said: "Good pace and coverage. The trainers are great and fun to talk to. The food was great!"

If you'd like to see how Brief Marketing can help you grow your business, either as a one off or on a retained basis – visit www.briefmarketing.co.uk, alternatively connect via facebook at www.briefmarketing.com/briefmarketing, twitter with @BriefMktg or find Brief Marketing on LinkedIn.

They'll also be at stand 13 of the Basingstoke Business Expo at the Apollo Hotel on March 22.

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Garden pavilion has the wow factor

For more information about hiring the new garden pavilion call Oakley Hall on 01256 783350 or go to www.oakleyhall-park.com

WOW-FACTOR venue Oakley Hall Hotel has some very exciting news – it is currently building a new £1.3m luxury garden pavilion to replace the previous marquee.

As well as a built in cloakroom, the garden pavilion will have a high-tech lighting system, a star-lit ceiling and colour changing up-lighters.

The windows will be double glazed glass with glass patio doors leading to an exclusive patio area. Three stunning chandeliers will be permanently installed in the ceiling, and a new dance floor will be available for those special events that require a lot of dancing.

Last but not least, the new garden pavilion will have the option to be either fully heated or fully air-conditioned.

This makes the garden pavilion a great space for larger meetings and corporate events as well as exhibitions which can be used all year round.

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Success set in stone

BASINGSTOKE business B&V Masonry, under the trading name stoneCIRCLE, has been in existence for 50 years – but two things are as important today as they were in 1968, superb quality and peerless service.

Bernard Vanhinsbergh, a self-taught stone carver and letter cutter who was committed to his craft and believed that his customers deserved those two promises when he founded the company and that philosophy and ethos has been preserved by his two sons, Jeff and Steve who took over the company from him on his retirement.

The firm has gone from strength to strength and now employs around 40 people with a £6million turnover and is one of the largest and most advanced factories in England, since the completion of a 20,000ft² extension in 2015. The new building is equipped with the latest computer controlled machinery, but still uses traditional mason's skills for hand finishing of certain jobs.

The company has two showrooms one at the Basingstoke factory and one in Newbury from which it sells directly

to the public, creating worktops, vanity tops, fireplaces and more in the stone of the customer's choice. They also work closely with local hotels, builders, interior designers and architects.

In recent years the company has received a number of commissions to manufacture artworks for artists including Susanna Heron and Julian Opie.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, stoneCIRCLE has produced a cookbook with recipes based on the countries where it sources its stone. A copy will be given to everyone who buys a kitchen worktop during the anniversary year.

For more infomration go to www.stone-circle.com, contact sales@stone-circle.com or call 01526 850380

Workshops to make your staff fit to work

JAMES Harrison of Connective Chiropractic is in no doubt about the benefit his business received from last year's Expo.

This year alone Connective Chiropractic have won the INSPIRE awards new business of the year award for North Hampshire and have also been highly commended in the national Best Of Business Awards, as voted for by local people, but the clinic continues to go from strength to strength.

Owner James said: "Last year's Basingstoke Business Expo really helped to spotlight my business.

"Not only did it help me to establish my business as part of the local business community, I met so many wonderful businesses there that have directly helped me to boost my business from a two to six day a week concern. I wouldn't have grown anywhere near as fast without having been there."

"I'm hugely proud to launch our workplace wellbeing workshops at this year's Expo and to offer a free workshop in April for local businesses, managers and HR directors to sample and ask questions.

"Our workshops are aimed at businesses of all sizes and are tailored to your needs. Our new workshops aim to strip back some of this complexity and get Basingstoke business health fired up to its optimum but we also aim to grow our workshop offering over the next few years to cover all aspects of workplace wellbeing, from musculoskeletal issues to workplace

James Harrison's Connective Chiropractic business has gone from strength to strength and now he wants to help your business

mental health issues. Watch this space."

The Basing View based chiropractor is no stranger to presenting, having previously been a lawyer and also an active member on one of the chiropractic association executive committees. But he explained: "This is a little different. Workplace wellbeing has been a topic of interest for HR directors and managers worldwide for a number of years but is a growing concern we all need to take note of.

"It's much more than just getting the chairs in your office right or learning about ergonomic lifting, but empowering wider wellbeing in your workforce to increase productivity and morale and reduce absenteeism (and hopefully the cost due to absenteeism).

"Health and healing is often much more complex than just how we stand, how we feel or what we choose to eat: These workshops give Basingstoke the opportunity to tap into an integrated way to improve knowledge about improving everyday health and mindset."

Connective Chiropractic feel the Basingstoke Business Expo 2018 is the perfect fit for launching the workshops and will be there to answer questions and provide some evidence-based statistics on workplace wellbeing. They are able to offer flexible payment schemes (including handy buy now, organise later options for those wanting to get the most out of their budgets before the end of the financial year) and are happy to travel to your workplace or host sessions at their offices. A free sample session morning on Saturday April 21 is an opportunity to find out more about workplace wellbeing and to discover how not focussing in on it might hold your business back in years to come.

Visit the Connective Chiropractic website and blog for more information about workplace wellbeing workshops, chiropractic care, business packages or to simply book an appointment with us for yourself or a friend.

Go to www.connectivechiropractic.co.uk or contact James directly at 07833 585 501 or james@connectivechiropractic.co.uk

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SANDRA Sergeant also operates The Right Kit which enables the smaller business to manage their social and web media content.

The Right Kit allows you to take amazing photographs using just your mobile phone, with little to no set up. The accessories offered will increase the quality of your photos and videos in almost any situation. So ask yourself do you have the right kit?

Check out the full range of phone lenses and accessories at www.rightkit.co.uk or get in contact by calling 07919 525929 or by emailing info@rightkit.co.uk.

■ *Look for the 15% off voucher in this edition*

Sweet taste for Expo

BUSINESS woman Caroline Hill is hoping it will be a case of all things nice and sugar and spice for her with the setting up of her own business.

She is looking forward to new and exciting times with her promotional confectionery business, set up as a response to growing demand for quality, affordable and ethically sourced promotional items.

All Confectionary2Brand products can be personalised with a business logo, branding or promotional message in full colour print quality from Fair Trade chocolate to sugar free mints, snacks and products suitable for those on specialist diets.

"The great thing about setting up your own business is that you have total control over how you develop and mould your vision for it, however that can also be a lonely journey and getting the word 'out there' is a tough one.

"So, it was fantastic, when a friend suggested I look to my local area to promote my business and I came across Basingstoke Business Expo 2018.

"It is a great opportunity to network, exchange ideas and exhibit with other local businesses and reach a wider audience. C2B are really excited to be part of this community enterprise and add a sweet element to the day."

Introducing new ranges for 2018, Caroline knows what is important to her customers and her future aspirations for the business.

She said: "Our number one priority is for quality and customer satisfaction. I worked within the customer service industry and trained staff on achieving customer satisfaction and that has always been prominent in my business working life.

"I want to achieve a level of growth that sees the business meeting it's potential; there is a large market for promotional products and confectionery is always well received at events and exhibitions but equally as a 'thank you' to staff."

Caroline said C2B is also mindful of the requirement to meet ethical and dietary needs adding: "We therefore source new and varied confectionery to meet these demands; such as 'Free From' products like Goody Good Stuff, with 100% naturally derived ingredients which are suitable for vegan and Halal diets. We also offer many 'sugar free' options and Fair Trade chocolate which supports communities growing the coffee beans.

"My aim is for 2018 to be Confectionery2Brand's best yet."

Confectionery2Brand is proud to showcase its extensive range of branded promotional products at the forthcoming Basingstoke B2B Expo.

We are located on Stand 30 and will be available to discuss your requirements and will be providing samples from our more popular ranges for you to try.

If you cannot attend contact us on 0203 633 1180 or email sales@confectionery2brand.co.uk or via the website at www.confectionery2brand.co.uk

The team from Petra Jewellery celebrate their awards success

Sharing the sparkle to outshine the rest

LOCAL business owner and jewellery designer Mitch Lloyd has generally learnt through trial and error, but year on year her business Petra Jewellery has grown.

Most significantly it was a change of thinking that lead to serious growth. Voted the Most Loved Jewellers in the UK for the past two years and recently winning the North Hampshire Inspire Service Excellence Awards along with record sales and a very happy team proves that putting the 'fluffy stuff' first has paid dividends – quite literally.

"The truth is there's no secret formula to business success and no algorithm you can apply to guarantee bountiful profit, however I'm confident that by sharing my experiences on stage to an audience of fellow business owners I can at very least remind them of some of the things they could be doing that will definitely have a positive impact on their business. I'm sure there will be some 'golden nuggets they might not have thought of too.

"It's a presentation packed full of tried and tested learnings focussed on how to generate profit as a serendipitous bi-product of making people happy; across your whole 'people ecosystem' – including staff, suppliers, customers, family and you!

"I think people will appreciate that I'm not an 'expert'; but I've taken and implemented thousands of pounds worth of quality advice from many incredibly experienced people over the years and have packed the bits that have worked (and not worked) into a 30 minute 'real life story' of how we've got to where we have today.

"Making money, enjoying the process and #SharingtheSparkle along the way has got to be my definition of success."

Mitch is on stage at 11am. If you have any questions for her please email mitch@petrajewellery.com and to follow her journey find her on Instagram @SerendipityandSparkle

Access all your storage needs

ACCESS Self Storage is one of the UK's leading self storage providers with more than 55 stores nationwide focussing on best value and hassle-free storage solutions.

Our business customers vary from SMEs to national companies and from office based businesses to high street retailers and tradesmen.

Businesses may use Access to store stock, tools, equipment or documents. As a number of our stores also offer flexible office spaces, a business can be fully functional from one of our sites.

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Perfect for start-ups and SMEs, our offices provide a flexible and cost-effective work space, available for hire by the hour, or on contract from just one month with all business rates, heating and lighting included.

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Ideal for short or long-term archiving requirements including files or data management. Access offer a serviced document and data storage facility with rapid receipt and dispatch, and scan-on-demand service.

Packing materials

From archive boxes to shrink-wrap for pallets, Access provide a comprehensive range of packing materials for the protection and organisation of goods in storage and transit.

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Our range of virtual office solutions allow individual home workers and small businesses to operate and expand whilst keeping costs low and without the hassle of long-term commitments. Our virtual office solution includes: mailboxes and mailing addresses, phone answering service and IP telephony.

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Published by Taylor Newspapers Limited, Newspaper House, 4A Hawksworth, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HR. Telephone 01235 511700. Printed by Iliffe Print Cambridge, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP